Art Meets Life: 31 Ways to Combine Watercolor and Flora with Kristy Rice

Chapter 1 - Art Meets Life: 31 Ways to Combine Watercolor and Flora

Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi I'm Kristy Rice, I'm a watercolorist, author and stylist. And in this daily challenge, we're gonna be learning about a technique that I call watercolor fragments, where we take actual live floral bits, the painted stroke on the page and sculpted paper bits as well, to create a really cool composition. We'll cover basic watercolor techniques, how to use one brush to its fullest advantage and how to choose the perfect fresh floral pieces for your composition. I'm a big believer in making art for joy's sake and part of that involves keeping it really simple when it comes to materials. We're going to be using a single palette, with a great variety of color, we're going to be using my absolute favorite brush which is the Royal and Langnickel Mini Majestic Dagger, it's a quarter inch size. But really any dagger out there around a quarter inch is gonna be great for you. You can get so many different type of strokes out of this one brush. It's got a really great fine point, it's got a really awesome broad side. I am using a cold pressed watercolor notebook. Cold pressed means there's a little bit of a rough texture to the paper which I think is fantastic, it shows up in photos really nicely and it just gives you great texture as you're painting. And of course, you'll need flowers. I'm working with a wide variety of blooms and I'm really excited about it, but here's the thing, don't feel like you need to go out and just dump a ton of money into flowers, go foraging, go walk in your backyard and pluck whatever's looking awesome at that time. And of course, you can go to a market like I did and get some of your favorites. But whatever you do, don't stress about the flowers. A little bit goes a really long way.

Day 1 - Introduction to techniques

- So we're gonna start with a little bit of practice. If you're new to all this watercolor stuff, you're in luck, because we're gonna make a chart. You're gonna learn some very specific techniques, and you'll be able to practice at your leisure. If you've done this watercolor thing before, let's just consider this a warmup. We're gonna make a chart. All you need is a ruler, some type of straight edge, a pencil and maybe an eraser. Making two columns. Don't get too picky with it. On this sheet, three rows. The first batch of techniques that I wanna go over are I call WOWD. It's wet on wet, wet on dry, and wet on damp. So your first is wet on wet. Then we'll do wet on dry. Wet on damp. In my opinion, these techniques are like the holy grail of watercolor. They're ones that you will use again and again and again and again in all different circumstances. So wet on wet is that juicy, explosive kind of texture that everybody seems to love about watercolor. Wet on dry is all about color, color, color, lots of saturation and lots of contrast. And wet on damp gives you this beautiful, kind of diffused texture where the water and the watercolor mingle, but they don't really explode quite yet. So it's just a great range of techniques that you're gonna love having in your arsenal. I like to start by wetting each color well a bit. It softens up the pigment. I also love to pain with two water containers, one that will be my kind of clean off the brush container. It's the water that will get super muddy, super dirty and then a second container that I will only dip a clean brush in. I'm not going to wet the metallics here because I'm not gonna be using them. Let's go ahead and get started. You're gonna dip your clean brush into the clean water, and just get a ton of water on the page. The water should be creating like puddles onto the paper. I usually say wet it until you think it's wet enough, and then wet it some more. Now I'm gonna just choose a color, whatever makes you happy, and

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start dabbing your color into the wet. Rinsing off, choosing another color. This is wet on wet guys. I'm gonna pick a third color. Let's see here. You can even tip the page a little bit and really encourage the mingling of water and pigment. Love that. One last one. You can dab, you can stroke, but I prefer dabs for wet on wet because it will maintain that soft texture when it's dry. I'm going to prepare this section here for the wet on damp right now with clean water because I want this to dry a little bit before we come back to it. So not as much water as we used with wet on wet. Now wet on dry, I'm going to get a little bit of clean water on my brush. I'm going to go to a blue, just because I like it. I'm not wetting the page. And just start laying that color down. You'll very quickly notice a completely different reaction that the paper is giving you. You're gonna notice kind of a tug on your brush. It won't move as smoothly. You can add a little water onto your brush to see the different textures you can get. But the point is to put wet color onto dry paper. Again, you can add more moisture, but you'll get a completely different look than you did with the wet on wet. I use the tip of my brush and make some thin strokes. Wet on dry is where you wanna be with any detail work that you plan on doing. The veins of a leaf, the texture of a petal. Now the paper's still damp, so you could go into say, I'm gonna do this green here. And still mingle together two colors. Just a little bit of pigment and water on your brush. Moving on to the wet on damp technique, one great way to know if it's damp enough is to just put your finger on it very lightly. It'll feel cool, but not soaking wet. So I'm dipping my brush into clean water. I'm choosing a color. And just make any mark really. And you'll see the subtle bit of color exploding, but it is super subtle. This is great for the first layer of detail that you might wanna add to a flower, where you don't want it to be super stark and bold. It's essentially a less expressive version of wet on wet. There you have it. We're gonna make another chart. This time we're working on line quality and spatter. Line quality is all about the brush and how much fun you can really have with the brush. You're gonna be learning how to create leaves and stems and branches and all sorts of fun stuff with one brush. Then we have spatter. For me, spatter's like watercolor party. It's just a great way to add a lot of texture and a lot of visual interest in a really simple technique. It's exactly like it sounds. We're spattering watercolor onto the page from our brush. Same as before, but we just need two sections. Please don't get hung up on this being perfect. It's so not the point. (laughs) Line work, spatter. I definitely though encourage you to, after this is done, rip it out and hang it up and have it be somewhere where you look at all the time and can refer to. First step is line work. Line work can be done on a wet page or a dry page. I'm gonna start wet on dry. I'm gonna use the very tip of the brush with a light touch. Think about this might be a stem. This might be some type of feathery green. Add a little bit more pressure and lift up and you have a leaf. Again this is all about line quality. Thick line that goes into a thin line is a leaf. A thin line that goes into a thick is a completely different type of leaf. Lay down another next to it, and you've got a third leaf. The lighter you touch the page, the more wispy and ethereal the green will be. I'm gonna wet the page ever so slightly down here just to show you the wet on damp again with line work specifically. Same light, soft strokes. But you immediately notice they're spreading a little bit, which can be so super helpful when you're painting different types of greens. Now it's time for spatter. Yes, this is our watercolor party. I'm just choosing a soft color to start with, just because I feel like it. It's really important though to have a lot of water on the brush and a lot of pigment. So kind of like a 50/50 mix. You can always dip back in to your water, get a little more water on there. Use your pencil, use another brush, whatever you've got. And you're gonna be tapping onto that pencil or brush and that spatter will then find it's home on the page. When you first start spattering, big drops like that will happen. You can dip back in the water if you want more big drops. You can clean your brush and just drop clean water onto what you've already

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done to kind of soften things. I'm gonna go for another color, cleaning my brush and getting a red. I need a little bit more water there. And spatter again. I'm gonna go ahead and get a brighter red and spatter again. Yeah, maybe a little yellow to finish it off. Spatter is a great technique for flowers that have really tiny textures. It's also fun when you're painting just needs that something and you don't know what it is. You can use it for big areas covering a lot of the page, or small areas. One thing to keep in mind though, it makes a mess. So if there are areas of your painting you don't want spatter to land on, cover with a bit of paper towel.

Day 2 - Brush exercises using leaves
- I don't want you to feel limited by using just one brush throughout this process. This brush can do so, so much for you. I've started with three different leaves that I've just plucked from the vase. I'm gonna wet my brush. I'm gonna use the broad side of my brush to start making marks. I don't do a lot of color mixing on a palette. I tend to let the colors mingle together on the page. So I don't want you to get super stressed out about what color I'm using and when. Again, using the broad side of my brush, loading up with some color and water. Pressing down, wiggling a little, lifting up. Cleaning my brush, choosing a lighter green. Coming right along side that first mark, pressing down, pulling up. Using the tip, make a little bit of a stem. Just loading up with some color and water. Same idea, broad side of brush, wiggle it a little, lift up. Add a little bit of water, go right next to that first mark you made. Wiggle, lift up. This leaf has some little touches of red at the top. So I'm gonna go in and add them. This is your wet-on-wet technique. Dab in some red. Let's paint a few more leaves. I'm just gonna fill up the page. I don't have any particular reference. Let's just have some fun. A lot of the wow factor in using this brush has to do with pressure, light pressure, heavy pressure. You can make so many different marks, depending on how much pressure you add to the push. Big leaves. Lots of water on the brush for this one. Bring in another color, have your wet-on-damp technique. If you feel like you've used too much color, just scoop some back up, and blot on your paper towel. Get some water on the brush and scoop. Blot and scoop. That's a great eucalyptus petal. Lifting up quickly can create kind of motion. Again, let the color mix on the page with that wet-on-wet technique. Creating the same stroke over and over again is a great way to loosen up, get your hand warmed up. Go back in, add a stem. Add some veins. This is loose, this is casual. You're not supposed to be creating a masterpiece here. This is about practice and fun. If you feel like the lines you're making are thicker than what you would hope, blot your brush, and maybe add a little bit of water, and blot again on the paper towel. It got really thick there, so I need to blot again. There we go. Again, this is just a great exercise to loosen yourself up. Okay. You can wiggle your brush, showed you a little bit of that before. Add a little bit of a second color for shading. Go right next to the first mark you made with clean water, and you still have really cool leaf. Adding a little blue onto the wet areas, just a nice dab, dab, dab. The point here is just to fill the page with random leaves to see how much variety you can get. Don't forget about your wet-on-wet, wet-on-dry, wet-on-damp. Mess around with adding some unexpected color. Think about your line work and how you can make leafy textures. You can go back into some of the leaves that you started and add some extra detail. You could even think about buds that have just a little bit of color showing. They're fun. Think about the angle you're holding your brush. Is it perpendicular to the page? Is it at an angle? What happens when you hold it perpendicular? What happens when you hold it at an angle. Don't worry about smudges, turn them into something. Practice making interesting marks next to one another. Think about like the top of a snapdragon. What does that look like? Little buds all clustered together. Think about how the contrast of big broad areas of color look beautiful next to some

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linear line work moments. And those smudges, just turn them into a leaf. Let's do another bud. I'm a big fan of buds. Wet-on-wet again. That pink just floods into that wet yellowish green color. I don't really know what any of these leaves are. That's not the point. It's just about loosening up here, your arm, your hand, your fingers. It's also a great way to get acquainted with a new palette. If you're working with a new palette, it's a great way to swatch out colors. And force yourself to fill the page. Because right about this point in the practicing, you're like, "Come on, I want to get something real." Right? But force yourself. Keep going until that page is full. A little bit more. That one I laid down way too much pigment, so I'm gonna scoop it up. It's all good. Let the color and the water run out of your brush. See what happens, see what it feels like. Remember how you can use it in a painting down the road. There we go.

Day 3 - Brush exercises using flower petals
- Let's not stress about flower petals, okay? We're gonna use a lot of the same techniques that we did with leaves and apply them to flower petals. Really the only difference is color. I have an assortment of flower petals here and actually a real flower. So, starting with the dahlia, a zinnia petal, a strawflower, another dahlia, and hellebore. And I'm just going to show you how to create each of these petals with the one brush. Getting my brush wet. For this one, I am gonna start with clean water and the broad side of my brush and just kind of draw out, so to speak, the petal with water. Go in and use kind of dark red and dab on some color. An even darker red. Need a little bit more water there. I'm using the tip of my brush here to define the shape a little more. I may come back to that. Cleaning my brush and going for an orange. I realize this isn't an orange petal, but you'll see. Broad side of the brush. Cleaning my brush and I'm grabbing a little bit of this pink. And dabbing it on. This flower's so cool because it's essentially the same shape over and over and over again. Start with the center. Again, I realize the colors don't really match back to this yet, but it will. Move this up a little. I'm kind of using the side of the tip. So, right there. I am gonna mix a little bit on my palette. Pink and red. This style of painting isn't about realism. It's about a feeling. It's about expressing the color... The general shape... And the general texture. Little bit of a rust, put on my brush, dab it in the middle. Gonna scoop up some of this. And I'll come back to that in a little bit. I'm not gonna try to do a white flower for this one, 'cause I just don't feel like it. So, I'm gonna use this creamy peach tone. Get a little bit of orange on my brush. And a little bit of yellow. And again, we're going back to the same wet and wet technique over and over again. It's the best thing ever. (chuckles) And last but not least, the hellebore. Using the tip of my brush there, just barely, getting that green down. And a little bit of a dirty brush... With water. Little bit of darker green on the brush to define the bottom there. Smoothing it out with the tip of my brush. After the first layer of color, you're gonna wanna let things dry a little bit and then we can move on to adding another layer of line work and texture. I'll dip into my dirty water and I am actually gonna mix a color here again. So, I'm starting with this deep pinky red. And bring in just something dark. Anything dark on your palette. Little more of a bright red here, there we go. Gonna use the tip of my brush and just add a little bit of line quality. Blot a little bit. Broad side of my brush, I'm kind of spreading out... That color I laid down. Loading up a little bit more color on my brush. To get even darker in a few areas. Clean the brush. Same idea for the zinnia petal. Mixing up orange, little bit of red, little bit of pink. Little bit more red. And tip of my brush, just add in some interest with line quality. Sometimes I find myself going out of the shape a little bit, adding little marks. Can be really fun. Going back to the strawflower. I wanna add in that center of the flower. Give ourselves a little bit of definition. Just using the tip of my brush, I'm kind of scratching on the color a little bit. I'll start adding in some

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more petals. With that same dark color that I used for the center. Another row of petals out here. I'm going in between the other petals that I've painted, not over top, fully. Moving on to the other dahlia petal. Probably gonna just use a light pink, maybe. And line quality. Just a little bit of soft touch with that soft pink. Again, remember, I didn't really wanna make a white petal. Last but not least, the hellebore. I've got this really nice white area that is really making that petal feel white, so we don't wanna lose that too much, so I'm just taking a little bit of blue with a lot of water... And adding some shadows. Super subtle. Tip of my brush in certain spots. You could punch that up a little bit in terms of the intensity of the blue if you want to. But for this one, less is definitely more. Now I'm gonna fill the page with some more petal shapes. Since we used the dahlia as kind of the inspiration for a lot of these petals, I think I'm just gonna create a dahlia from my memory. I'm using just kind of a burgundy shade right now. Broad side of the brush with varying pressure. If you want more point, lift up. If you want more girth, push down. Mix in some other color, why not? And you can see right away, very similar to how we created our leaves. And notice again, I love to mix my color on the page. A little pink, bring it in. Let the water and the pigment do all the work. Let's move along, let's do a zinnia. Yellow center. Go back to that color I mixed on the palette. And start adding some of these boxy-like petals. Broad side of the brush. Keep going until the color runs out. And you probably remember making marks just like this for our leaves portion. Adding a little bit of yellow at the base for some of these, just for some interest. And let's get another color going in there a little bit. Some line work towards the center. Don't worry about the colors starting to bleed in areas. And let's do another dahlia. Try not to think about, oh my gosh, I'm already painting a flower, what? Try to just think about the petals that you're creating. Just like these up here. Bring in some pink. Again, I'm thinking back to this petal we were making earlier, and just using what I created there and turning it into a whole flower. Nothing like a really fun green or dark center in a flower to make it really pop. Little bit of line work. And again, there's our first layer. So, let's go back and start a second layer. Lots of line work. Follow the curves of the petals that you already put down. Some areas may still be wet. It's totally okay. I'm using a really dark purple here now. It's getting a little purple, so I'm gonna add some red. Sometimes I love just line work to finish a petal. Like here, I won't fill that in. It's just so interesting. And just a little dark touch in the center. Let's go back to the zinnia. Zinnias have these kind of natural striations on each petal. It's a great opportunity to add texture. I'm really liking this one almost how it is. So, I'm not gonna do too much here. And our last dahlia. Let's add some leaves. And you'll start to feel really good about life. Okay. Practicing these individual petals is really important. Don't get me wrong. But sometimes you have to give yourself a little treat. And if you're starting to feel like, I just wanna paint these flowers, then by all means, paint the flowers.

Day 4 - Paper petals

- A big part of the watercolor fragments technique is obviously using real flower petals and leaves, but I also love to add dimension with hand-cut, hand-sculpted paper petals and leaves, and I'm gonna show you how. I've cut one of the watercolor sheets into quarters, so make sure you have those on-hand. I also have some pieces of a dahlia, a leaf and a bud that hasn't bloomed yet. And of course, a pair of scissors. I like to start with the center. You'll have to do a little bit of manicuring so it lies flat. I'm just gonna cut all of this off, and there's your center. Gonna place a couple of real dahlia petals here and there. No rhyme or reason really. Whatever you feel like looks good. Kinda pushing those underneath the bud a little bit. But remember, this is all kinda floating on the page. If you sneeze, there goes your composition. So just kinda keep that in mind as you work. Don't work

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next to an open window, all that kinda good stuff. And now I feel like I wanna add some extra dimension with a paper petal. So I'm gonna use my scissors and just very roughly, loosely cut a petal shape. Don't get tangled up in the exact shape and making it just perfect. A little wiggly tear drop, as I like to call it. I'm going to paint it now. Wet and wet, get some water on there, your fingers are gonna get messy, it's all good. Some orange, blot, little bit of red on the edges maybe. Yeah, that looks good. Little bit more red. I'm gonna use my pencil to curl this a little bit. And yes, I just put my pencil on wet paper. Go with it, it looks cool, don't stress. And I think a little bit more orange, and I'm gonna tuck this in here. Let's do another. (paper cutting) Smaller scissors are better. They really help you kind of navigate the fine detail of cutting a petal out. I'm gonna cut a bunch more here all at once. See, one, two, three, four, five. They don't have to be the exact same shape or size, better yet that they're not. (paper cutting) And remember the end game here is to take an awesome snapshot of your finished composition. And that's how it'll live on forever. One, two, three, four, five, okay. You can also roll beforehand if it really freaks you out putting your pencil into the wet petal. We can roll before. You don't get as smooth of a roll, but it can be done. Orange again, some red, and place. Your hands will get paint on them, so keep that in mind as you're navigating the composition, if you don't wanna get paint on the page. You can even use your brush to roll. Smooth that back out again. This is super loosey-goosey, super sloppy, but look how cool it looks when you lay it down. That's why this technique is so incredibly fun. Now I'm actually feeling like I wanna paint a petal directly on here, so I'm going to. Broad side of the brush, press down, lift up. Right next to it, press down, lift up. Go back to my paper petal here, curl it. Let's do one more, and then we're gonna start adding back in some real dahlia petals. I'm not even gonna curl this one, 'cause that looks so cool. If you like to be more exact, you could bring in a pair of tweezers, and set all of your petals with tweezers. But, definitely not needed. You can even use your brush to set the petals. Now I'm feeling like my paper petals need a little bit more oomph, so, carefully, I'm gonna go back in and paint right into the wet paper petal. Got this great little daisy green. Hmm, I don't really like it there. Play around with things, move things around until you're really satisfied. These were those little bits that we cut off from the center when we started, use them. And then I always like to balance with some more painted leaves. Take a step back, breathe a moment, see if you wanna add some more. I wanna add some underneath, for some depth. My little hole here. There ya go. A little secret, if you don't like the color of the petals or the center that you put down, you can actually paint over top of them. We'll get into that a little bit later. And for now, I'm gonna leave this one like it is.

Day 5 - iPhone photography - tips, editing
- Because we're using actual flower petals, the only way that you're gonna be able to capture your work is with a photo. Now I'm sure you have your own way of snapping shots but I'm gonna show you my technique exactly. I'm using an iPhone but the one thing I need to tell ya that's super important is to make sure you use natural light. So, get next to a window and you'll be all set. I'm just using the regular photo app for this. I'm gonna be shooting from directly above. I would definitely recommend avoiding moving this piece around too much, so get next to the window and get everything in place and try not to move your painting because again, we didn't use glue so it can fly away really easily. Just the regular camera app here. Gonna snap a shot. Get a little closer, snap again. Sometimes I like to get angles but that's just for fun. Okay, now editing. I use an app called Afterlight. You'll have to put in a couple bucks but it's totally worth it. And you just head in there and you grab your favorite shot. I usually start out right here. This is kind of your contrast, brightness, all that kinda fun stuff and I usually start by taking up the contrast a little bit. That was at

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about 45. Hit the check mark. Then I go to brightness and I usually peg the brightness 100% and then I usually go back in and give it a little more. Guys, I am not a professional photographer but this is just what I feel looks really cool. You do you. I also am a fan of the magic wand. I'll show you that again. Photographers out there are probably cringing but it's okay. Just a little bit of the clarify, magic wand, whatever you wanna call it. And at this point, you might look and say, gosh I feel like it needs to be brighter, get rid of those shadows. Done. Save. You're probably wondering what in the world do I do with this piece now that it's done, it's going to do die. So, I am a big fan of just letting it go, wiping it away, tossing it in the garbage, but not before I document the process so I can post it on Instagram. And I love taking a video, wipe it away. It's just so cathartic.

Day 6 - Bloom with leaves

- I love to paint flowers near the end of their life. They just seem to be more open, a little bit more graceful, and have a lot more interesting texture. Here I have some beautiful ranunculus, and I wanna show you exactly how I would choose the perfect flower. Lots of options here. This one for example I wouldn't use. It's still too new. It's really tight. Some nice options in here. This one, the color's a little funny, I'm gonna pass that one by. This one's cool, near the end of its life, but it's showing a little bit too much of it's like weirdness in the center there, so I'm gonna pass it off. This is the perfect one. Love this one so much. It's nice and full, the color's still intact, some of the petals are starting to fall away, which adds a lot of interest. Love this one, I'm gonna go with it. I also have a variety of greens here that I've chosen. I love the delicate nature of this one. Little white blooms that are gonna come in handy for some fun texture. A little leaf, and of course a little ranunculus bud for who knows what yet. I like to start with the main bloom. We're just gonna do a really simple composition today. And this bloom is gonna be the focal point, and you see what I'm doing here. I'm actually kind of manipulating the bloom a little bit. Flowers aren't as fragile as we think they are, so get in there and make it look awesome. So I'm just pulling things apart, fluffing it up. There we go. And now it's just about playing, and adding pieces that you think look beautiful. Gonna add in a leaf, maybe it'll stay there. Maybe it won't. And I'm just gonna start painting, because I feel like it, and I feel like I wanna add some leaves, and see how that looks. Remember, your composition is about fresh floral, painted pieces right on the page, and if you choose to add some paper elements, hand torn paper, or hand cut paper, sculpted paper. So you should always be thinking about all three of those options, and what would look best. Using my dagger brush again. Push down, lift up. Just creating some really, really simple leaves. Maybe I'll move this one here. Something I love to do is paint in a little bit of a shadow. So when you take your final photo of the piece, it really adds some tremendous dimension. You can follow the shadow that is right on the page, and paint that in. I don't really like the shape of my leaf right now, so I'm gonna work on extending this out a little bit. This watercolor paper that I'm using is fantastic. Any decent watercolor paper should take a while to dry. It shouldn't dry up instantly, giving you the time you need to play, and push the water, and color around on the page. So definitely take advantage of that, as you're painting, and remember that that first color, that first brush stroke that you put down, is not the final final. See how I'm continuing to move that color around, and I keep adding, dabbing in additional colors. Adding more detail. Okay. Let's bring in some more elements. Remember to snip off the very base of the flower, so that, or the bud, so that it can lay flat on the page. I like that there, I'm just tucking it in. And let's add some of these beautiful daisy like pieces. Now your first instinct maybe would be to cut that full head off, and just work with that, but I really like to deconstruct the flower, and cutoff individual blooms. You have a lot more control. Remember you can use your scissors, or use your brush to

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place things just so. I feel like I wanna add a little more painted areas here. Just mixing a nice kind of olive green. Using the tip of my brush, and adding in some stem. A great detail to think about with the watercolor fragments technique is, trying to mingle in painted areas where there is fresh flower. It creates such an interesting kind of surprise element, and sometimes after you've taken the photo, it's very hard to tell what's painted and what's real, which is fun. Just taking a whisper of a blue, meaning lots of water, not a lot of pigment on the brush. And adding in some petals. And this almost looks like, yeah, a white flower without having to stress out about painting a white flower. So just a soft blue in there. Takes on the appearance of a white bloom. Little bit of yellow in there. Well, that's a little too much yellow, scoop it up. Take a moment always to just kind of sit back, evaluate, see how you feel about what you've done so far. Do you like the composition? Do you wanna change it in any way? I might add a little bit of something here. Not sure where though, and maybe I won't end up using it. But the point is to play. Experiment. There we go. Love that. This is a great opportunity to go in again, and add some painted elements, right up next to the live flower. Trick of the eye. Adding a little bud there. Dabbing in a little bit of dimension with a darker tone. Just used a dark blue from my palette. And remember I'm just using the very tip of my brush here, to get those fine, fine lines. This leaf is still bothering me. I'm annoyed with its shape. Let's see if I can fix it. There we go. And notice that paper is still wet there, which is so awesome, because I can go in, and still change this leaf that I'm not too thrilled with. Okay, that's a much better shape. Add some line work here. Maybe something similar up here. And maybe just a little bit more shadow over here. And I think we're about there. All right, and don't forget to snap a photo.

Day 7 - Berries and blossoms

- Today, we're working on a little bit more of an interesting pattern. We're really gonna kind of be considering the entire page and I've chosen some really interesting elements to use. Not your typical pretty flowers. So let's get started. I've got this pokeweed here that I just love and we're gonna start with that. Gonna pull off any bits that are not so attractive and just see where I want it to land on the page. I'm actually gonna snip it a little bit, a lotta bit. Because I'm already thinking ahead, I might want to actually paint in more of the stem and have that be part of the composition. So something you can do when an element is not laying flat and you want it to be a little bit closer to the page is snip off any of the berries or leaves or fruit or whatever it may be that are getting in your way. So we're essentially making it flat on one side, flat as possible. There we go. I'm gonna snip it even further down. Perfect, that's pretty flat to the page. Gonna start painting. I'm gonna extend this stem. Sometimes closing one eye can help you line up your painted stem to your real stem. With the very tip of the brush, just adding some berries. Almost drawing with my brush right now. One color. And then I'll go in with a little blue here to darken up this pink. Rinsing off the brush. I see a little green, just dabbing that in. Maybe a little additional green berry up here. I just love berries. I love the shape. They're so interesting and fun to paint. Paint the stem. I'm barely touching the page here, very little pressure. Okay, we're gonna come back to this. I'm gonna start adding some additional elements. Like I said, not your traditional pretty flowers. This is a Scabiosa Pod. A dahlia bud, which is also super interesting. And some of those berries that I snipped off, look how pretty they are. Bring some of those in. As you create these compositions, you'll start to notice that your scissors become like your extra hand. With the snipping off little bits here and there. So right now, you're looking at this and you're probably thinking, oh goodness, how is this gonna come together? But it will. Little succulent bloom here. Now I'm gonna get down to some painting. I'm gonna paint another one of these succulent blooms right next to this first one. Kinda making this

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part of it with my brush. Up here, I kind of pressed. I gave a little bit of pressure, not too much, with the tip of the brush, and down here I lifted up. Getting a darker red. A bit of a stem. Gonna let that dry a little bit. Gonna add another Scabiosa Pod right over here. A very strange-looking little creature, but they're fun. I'm using just like a nude color. Dab in some green. Definitely one we're gonna have to come back to to add those little star-like details. A bit of an ochre to the right. And I'll just start there. So eventually, I'm gonna bring in some fresh eucalyptus, but for now I want to paint in some eucalyptus. Just mix a green with a really pretty blue, soft blue here. Get a nice icy green. Same concept, press and lift. One stroke right next to the other. If you look closely, eucalyptus typically has a little bit of little touch of red on the edges. So we'll add that in. If the red that you put down or any color you put down, you feel like, oh, that's too strong, just get some clean water and blend it out. Sometimes I'll purposely put down brighter color than I know that I need and then use the water to blend it out, like I'm doing here. Gives a really cool effect. And let's get some of those little seeded parts of the eucalyptus. You can just keep going and going and going or you can make a quick exercise out of it. But if you're enjoying yourself, just keep adding and you can always come back even an hour later, everything will still be alive. And then go back to the Scabiosa down here. I'm just dotting in some green. Intensify this a little bit. Gonna add some texture to the Scabiosa Pod. Very tip of my brush, basically disrupting the edge of that original circle that I made with some small thin marks. I'm using just a kind of a peachy tone. Almost colorless. And I'm really, really wanting to put in those little dark stars on the Scabiosa. It's probably too early but I'm gonna try it anyway because I like to paint in a way that makes me happy. And if I want to do something in a given moment, I'm gonna do it. It's probably too early but let's see. There comes a point when you're painting where you start to get a little, dare I say, bored with what you're doing. Maybe things aren't looking like you'd hoped they would by that time. It's at that point when you're painting that I say do something bold. Do something that's gonna get you excited again for what you're painting and don't worry about the rules that say you shouldn't do that thing. And I'm so glad I did that because now it's starting to look like a Scabiosa Pod. All right, let's add in some eucalyptus. I am thinking about composition but not getting too, too worried about it. I'm snipping off some of these pieces so it'll lie flat. There you go. Repetition is a big thing. I love these little berries here but I'm gonna go ahead and paint a couple of them over here, get a little repetition going. Just using the tip of the brush, leaving a little white space for the centers. Adding a green berry here. Adding a dark blue for some dimension in the berry, just dabbing it in and letting the water and the pigment do their thing. A little intense, scoop a little up. Go. I'm gonna head back over here and give some intensity to these berries. Define their shape a little more. If anything kind of gets bumped out of place, don't worry. Just pop it back into place. I wanna give the eucalyptus a little more intensity, add some line work perhaps. It'll get a little tricky because you've got natural elements now kind of in your way. You can even remove a piece that's in your way, get where you need to go. And put it back. Adding a little bit of blue. At this stage of your piece, you might be thinking what in the world is happening? You might feel like your eyes are starting to cross. There's a lot of elements going on so what I like to do when I feel that way is stop for a moment and just take a snapshot. Gives you a little bit more perspective. Pull it up, take a look at it. You'll usually feel a lot better about what you've done when you take a look at it on the screen. And at this point, you can say I want to add this, I want to add that, maybe I want to stop here, and so on. But it's just a great tool to kind of refresh your eye and know what to do next. Looking at my photo, what I'm feeling is that we're close. We're about wrapping up here but I still want to add a little more detail in these berries here. I think I might want to add a third Scabiosa down here just for some balance. But

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other than that, it's looking pretty good. Go in and add the third Scabiosa right about here. When you're thinking about composition, really simple but effective tool is to think in odd numbers. Odd numbers are just more pleasing to the eye. Little green dots here and there, let that dry. I'm gonna go back to these berries. They smudged a little, so I'm gonna add another one in here. Little bit of line work. More definition in the Scabiosa I painted first. Notice I'm just adding really light little dots everywhere, here and there. They just add interest. Going back here. Some shadow. And adding in those lovely little Scabiosa stars. Few more shadows.

Day 8 - Garden roses
- This composition is a real quick one, so if you don't have a lot of time, this is the one for you. It's super satisfying and doesn't take a lot of your day at all, so let's get into it. I just happen to have three amazing roses here, but you can really use anything depending on the time of year. Maybe you have access to peonies in the spring, rose of Sharon later in the year. It could be anything that just has a lot of beautiful petals. So the first thing you wanna do is, again, completely snip off that base on each one. Trying to make as flat a surface as possible. And, yes, things will go flying. It's all good. You can just sweep off your paper. You're gonna make a mess. No worries. Now, you do wanna spend some time manipulating the bloom, getting it to open a little bit more. See that? Isn't that incredible? It's my favorite part of the rose. But you really gotta get it to open up. And then decide where you wanna place it on the page. You don't have to open up every single bloom. We're gonna be painting in the stems, so place your blooms at different heights. And just play around with that until you're happy. Okay. Let's get painting. Choose any green, favorite green, whatever it may be. Get enough water and pigment on your brush so it's nice and juicy. Now, this could be scary for some. I'm gonna make a big, long, straight-ish line. Don't panic. Use basically from here to here on your brush, so from the tip down about 1/4 inch. You don't wanna use the whole broad side, or it'll be too thick of a stem. Notice my pinky finger I have on the page. That's bracing my hand. It's giving me some more steady feel as I drag down the page. My brush is at an angle. Don't worry if it's not perfectly straight. Take a look at a rose stem. It is not straight. It's got all sorts of interesting little jut-outs, of course the thorns, which I'm gonna go back in and add some. All right. Stem number one. At this point, you might decide you wanna move another bloom, by all means. I am gonna move this one down here a little. I'm using the tip with some pressure. At this point, I feel like I wanna add in a leaf. I saved some of the leaves from the actual roses. Bring one of those in. Oh, love that. So simple. Sometimes the most simple elements are the most impactful. Adding a little bit of blue for shadow, just putting it right along the edge. Gonna move my leaf for a time 'cause it's in my way. Let's go back over here. Even though it dried a little bit more, add in some of that blue for shadow. Love it. Let's get our third stem in there. Little trickier. If you feel like you wanna move your whole notebook to get a better angle, by all means, do it. Remember, at any stage of this, you can take a snapshot to kind of check your composition. I'm gonna paint in a leaf here. Pressing down really hard, wiggling a little bit, lifting up. Reloading my brush, going right next to it. Wiggle, lift up, finish that shape. I didn't quite get the shape I wanted. Add a little bit of red. I love adding unexpected color. Just want to add a little bit of what I'm going to call the underleaf (laughs) to the rose here. I don't know if that's really what it's called, but I'm sure someone will tell me. Just for some more dimension, I'm pressing down, dragging, and lifting up. There you go. Add a little bit over here. And you know what? I'm really not loving this leaf here anymore. I want it over here. Add some more leaf under here. Some blue on the brush for dimension. And a little bit here. If you had to, you could remove this to get better access. Don't be afraid to move your flower elements. Okay.

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Go back into the stem a little bit. I've talked about putting in shadows and how fun that can be and what a trick of the eye it can be. So let's give some more dimension here. I love showing the finished photographs of these pieces that I do to people, and I love saying, "Okay, guess what's real, and guess what's not." And sometimes they have a really hard time figuring it out, which is super fun. I'm using a little bit of a dark red, almost like a burgundy. Oh, yeah, that's so pretty. Little clean water to smooth everything out. I'm gonna go back to this stem. It's a little too wobbly for me, for lack of a better word. But I do need to re-wet it 'cause it's completely dry. So I'm just taking some clean water and re-wetting it. And then I can go in and really define the shape a little more. That burgundy. Definitely notice that that burgundy color is present in the actual rose stem, but I'm intensifying it 'cause it's just awesome. Let's just add a few wispy lines here and there. And I smudged, so I'm gonna add a leaf. This is low-stress painting, guys. Smudges don't matter. Gonna add a little bit of line work over in this leaf. Very tip of my brush. Barely touching the page. And the last little trick I wanna show you is something that some people kind of gasp at, but I love to add a little bit of paint into the actual blooms from time to time. It's just a little unexpected wow factor. So I'm taking clean water. And depending on the bloom, depending how it's been treated, it may resist the water. I'm loading up my brush with a good amount of paint. And I'm just going in there and seeing how it will take the paint. It's almost like you're adding little droplets of extra color. Some people may never even notice when they look at the photo. Some will. Okay. Roses are pretty hardy out of water, so feel free to use these for another painting.

Day 9 - Watercolor book wreath
- I've published several watercoloring books, and so today we're going to be using a page from one of them. This is "Kristy's Summer Cutting Garden," and here's the page we're gonna use. If you're printing it out, be sure to print on watercolor paper. To start, I'm gonna keep this page intact and really just kinda fill in with some really pretty watercolor washes. Starting with a nude, wet on dry, add a little pink. Don't worry if you go outside the lines, like I just did, 'cause we're gonna be cutting these out. Work fast. We're not gonna put in a lot of detail. Of course, you can if you want, but today I'm just gonna lay down some really fun washes with my favorite colors from the palette, rinsing my brush in between each color. Doesn't have to be perfect. I didn't perfectly fill in the succulent. I'm not thinking too much about the color I'm laying down. I know I want the leaf to be green. I'm just kinda going to whatever green I run into first on my palette, just keeping it easy, breezy, simple. Painting half the leaf with one color, going in with another, letting them mingle on the page, mix themselves together. You can start by wetting the flower first. You really want to get that juicy, explosive watercolor effect. Just keep yourself moving. This one is meant to just be super relaxed. Bounce around the whole page. Don't stay in one place too long. Using the tip of my brush and the broad side, back and forth, either/or. And again, just a reminder, if you go out of the lines, it's all good. We're cutting these out. Use the colors you love. I'm not gonna paint these smaller bits. They're just gonna be too tedious to cut out, so I'm just really sticking with the larger areas. Another great point about this particular composition is you can paint this first if you run out of time. Paint this, let it aside to dry. Come back later to build the wreath using your fresh elements. You definitely don't have to do it all in one sitting. Okay, while this is drying, I'm gonna go ahead and paint a background in the notebook, and that'll be our base for the wreath. Just get a bunch of water all over the page. You don't have to go right to the edge. Can pour a little water on the page, then spread it out. It's a great way of getting a lot of water on the page fast. And then start laying down some color. I'm gonna go with some pretty blue-greens. And you're just using the broad side of the

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brush and making kind of X marks all over the page. Watch that color fly. Ugh, I love it. Perfect. So we obviously need to let this dry, and you'll notice there is definite a curl and a buckle to the page, which is completely normal. So set this aside, let it dry. If it's not flat enough for you as it dries, you can put it under a book, or you can also just put a tiny clip at the top and the bottom of the page. Now we're gonna move on to cutting out the flowers we painted when we started. What I do first is a little startling, but I want to cut these pieces down into more manageable sizes. So I'm literally cutting apart the leaf from the flower so that I have smaller pieces of paper to cut more precisely. Very rough, don't take a lot of time here. The best advice for cutting is to move the paper, not your hand with the scissors in them. You can move that paper back and forth so easily and get the prettiest, most precise cuts if you just keep your scissor hand steady. So I have the paper in between my thumb and my pointer finger, very lightly, and I'm just moving it ever so gently, back and forth, back and forth, to follow the contours of the flower that I painted. Doesn't have to be perfect. You don't have to preserve the outline perfectly. I have one. And we just keep going. Once I learned this trick of moving my hand that doesn't have the scissors in them, it was like a huge epiphany, made cutting so much easier, trust me. It's okay to leave little slivers of white, unpainted paper. That can add some depth later on. I'm gonna keep this leaf attached to the flower, but you could also separate it, depending on the look you're after. So it's almost like your paper is on the hinge, and the hinge is the scissor. I definitely recommend a smaller-scale pair of scissors, sewing scissors, just something that's smaller. You definitely don't want a big pair with very thick blades. You want something a little finer. Now we're ready to start arranging. The background is dry now, and it definitely flattened out nicely. So it's time to start arranging. I'm bringing in some of the paper petals from a few days ago, to add those in here and there. Course, I have our pieces that are cut out, and then I have some fruit, fresh floral, and some leaves. First, want to choose a piece to start with, and I'm gonna go with this one. Bring your brush out, make sure it's dry, and you can curl a little bit. Definitely a little secret weapon of this particular composition is to curl some edges. It just gives them a little bit more life, a little bit more realism. And just start placing. Since this is going to be a wreath, it's gonna kinda be an oval. I'm gonna start placing pieces all around to establish my general shape. In terms of which petals I decide to roll, I usually do about three rolls per cutout. A couple of these down. You could use kumquats, you could use berries, whatever you find at the market. At this stage, everything's in flux. You're just getting things laid down, and you're gonna be doing a lot of moving around. As you work, things are going to move around. It's okay. Like I said, everything's in flux. Everything can be moved, perfected, before you take that final snapshot. I've got a leaf from a rose. Maybe it'll look good. Let's try. It's kinda fun. You can also, this one's a little too big. I'm gonna cut this leaf down. I'm maintaining the leaf shape. So I can use it up here or here. Right there. Just keep moving around the wreath, building your shape, defining your shape. You can even go back in to these painted cutouts and add some line work. Hold the cutout down a little, and add your definition. This watercolor fragments style is a practice in patience. It's a practice in control, approaching the paper with kind of a delicate quality, so you don't disrupt everything you've worked so hard to create. Ah, I find it to be a great exercise for your watercolor skills as a whole. I'm gonna bring back in some of these petals from a few days ago. Just have to find the perfect spot. Maybe we cut them down and build a little sideways bloom over here, pointing downwards. Let's tuck it underneath that leaf there. Love it. So suddenly, your five leaves or petals or however many you had can easily turn into 10 or more if you start trimming them down. This area is feeling a little empty down here, so just always want to be thinking, evaluating, and deciding what needs more, what needs moved, what would look better where. Never be afraid to really start

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moving things around if it's just not feeling right. There we go. As a matter of fact, this feels really heavy up here, and my eye keeps going to it, but not in a good way. So I am going to move this down here. I know, it's okay. Breathe. It's all good (chuckles). There we go. I'm actually gonna steal a couple petals from this too. I have an idea. I love the feel of the live petals down there, and I want some up here too. So we're gonna build a little paper-real flower hybrid. I've got a cute little daisy over here that would make the perfect center. There we go. I don't want to cover up those beauties. Bring some of these daisies down here for nice continuity. The joy of this process is what's happening right now. It's really not in the final photo. It's not in picking out the flowers beforehand. The joy is right here and walking yourself through decisions about composition and balance. This is where the magic happens. This is where this process gets really, really interesting, and this is where this process has a lot to teach you. So don't be afraid to experiment. Don't be afraid to move, to start over, to shift, 'cause that's where things get really exciting. This would be a great time to snap a shot, just to see where you're at, see if you're happy with things. Feel like I want this leaf even smaller. I'm not really liking that one there anymore. There we go. Few more painted leaves. I feel like this fuchsia area up here is really heavy, so I'm gonna add a couple of the fuchsia petals sprinkled around elsewhere, just to keep the eye moving from here throughout. Sometimes a sprinkle of loose petals can just add so much. Few more. Sometimes the tiniest details make all the difference.

Day 10 - â œBe stillâ •
- I love incorporating text into my artwork. And today, we're gonna do just that. I've chosen a variety of greenery specifically for their kind of graceful vibe. Each of these specimens has something very delicate about it, very soft, very fine, and they're gonna work perfectly for creating text in our artwork. We'll start out by using a pencil. I do wanna sketch out the actual text to give myself a guideline. I'm gonna use the text be still. I would definitely recommend you following along with the same exact text as me, at least for the first time. And then, you can venture off on your own. Just use your handwriting. And just very lightly sketch it out. Okay. Now we can start placing some greenery and painting some elements on as well. When we begin, you really wanna start looking for pieces of greenery that follow the curves of your letters. You can actually mold the greenery a little bit, just pressing it into the shape that you want it to take on. Lay it down, see if it works. If it doesn't, maybe it works somewhere else. That's looking pretty good. And just continue on. The Queen Anne's lace here is perfect for this exercise. These long, skinny stems and whispery flower petals are just awesome. And see, I'm just following along with the curve of the pencil lines that I made. This is a lot of experimentation, give and take. It can be really detailed. I'm just using individual flower petals right now. It's a little tedious, but just get into the process. Focus on exactly the moment you're trying to make and enjoy it. Gonna place a couple more pieces, and then, I'm just feeling the urge to paint. You're really gonna be just doing line work here, little touches, little brush strokes, little marks. They can resemble leaves. They can resemble petals. I'm going in between the petals, just to give a little bit of definition with a few dots. If you're feeling brave, feel free to use some larger brush strokes. I'm using the short edge to make that mark and pressing down just a little bit. I'm starting to feel like I want a little bit of color. And I do love to flourish a little bit more obviously one part of one letter. So here, it's gonna be the b. It's got this really cool curve, and I'm gonna really flourish that with some extra greenery. Again, just some simple beautiful line work. Use whatever green you love. If something doesn't look good, move it, change it. For me, the goal throughout this is to keep in mind that I'm trying to cover up the pencil lines. So if you do need to

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go back in with touches of stronger color that kind of camouflage the pencil lines a little more, by all means, do that. It may sound odd, but make sure you're breathing. When you're doing tedious work like this, you can all of a sudden realize, wow, not really breathing. And it's really the best way to keep your concentration. Make sure you're taking nice steady breaths and not holding your breath. Where two stems meet can often look a little awkward, so I like to just toss on a little bit of something whispy to bring everything together. And it usually takes a little bit of finesse to make it just so. Take a step back. See if there's any place you want a little bit more punch of contrast or color. This exercise today is awesome, especially if you don't have time to go to a florist and get all the pretty blooms, because it's super greenery-heavy and really looks its best and most delicate with greenery.

Day 11 - Strawberries
- It's finally time to bring in some fruit, and we're starting with strawberries. I have three beautiful strawberries and a selection of greens, and now it's time to start arranging. I like to start with my main elements, lay them down first where I think they're gonna be most visually strong. Can always move them. And then dive right into painting. I'm gonna be adding leaves, a couple blossoms, some stems, and whatever else happens. I wanna make a really delicate stem here. Yeah. You wanna think about how these all are gonna connect if they will connect. I'm feeling like I wanna sketch a little bit, so I shall sketch. Little blossom. I'm making a very scratchy circle essentially with a couple petals. Five, to be exact. Don't worry that the stem's kind of invading the petal. We'll fix that. Remember to enjoy this process. This is the amazing part of it all, not the finished piece, although the finished piece can be pretty darn amazing, too. Add some real blooms. I wanna cover up that stem, so I'm really gonna lay on some pigment there fairly heavily. I'm not gonna bother it too much. Never be afraid to let a little green push into a nearby pink or a red. It can look so cool. Definitely wanna paint in some shadow in this one. These strawberries are throwing some wicked awesome shadows. I think I'm gonna go ahead and paint the third strawberry. So let's get that out of the way. I'm gonna paint a strawberry shape just with water. And start with some red. If you feel like that green interrupting into the red is too much, just scoop it up and blot. Okay. I'm gonna go down here, and I am going to start painting a white bloom just using really soft blue to kind of fake the idea of it being white. Don't stress out. I'm gonna move this strawberry, it's in my way. You can also really make a white bloom feel white in watercolor by what surrounds it, so get that black center in there. It'll really start to feel like a white bloom. And get some greenery in here. And some simple line work to bring out the detail. I'm still letting this one dry. I wanna add some more contrast in there, but still pretty wet. A really dark pink around some of the edges. Don't put it around the entire edge or it'll look like an outline. And a touch of black. When used in the right place at the right time, it can be so powerful. Don't panic that that's happening. It's all good. Didn't realize that was wet. Taking some clean water, blot, clean dry brush. Scoop it up. Repeat that up here, clean water, dry your brush off, clean dry brush. Scoop it up. Like it never happened. Feel like I need a little something here. Let's see if this does the trick. I think so. And I really feel like we need a little baby strawberry somewhere. Just doesn't wanna dry up here. I keep trying to force it. I'll let this strawberry dry a little bit. I'm gonna head back in to do some detail and hope it's dry enough, and it is. Yay. Definitely applying the watercolor a little heavier here. Don't ever be afraid to do that. Just a lot less water on the brush with your pigment can really create some beautiful effects. I don't often use white watercolor, but strawberry seeds are just one of those times where you need a little highlight, little sparkle. And just a little bit of touch of detail down here. Nothing too crazy. And I have some rogue marks here on

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the page. So it's time for some spatter to cover that up. Just going with a soft peach for the spatter. Lots of pigment, lots of water. I'm really gonna try to protect the white flower from getting hit too badly. I've rested the pencil which I'm using to tap on down on the page and you get a little bit more control as to where the spatter's going. That did it. There will come a painting there you have marks that you have no idea how they got there, and spatter is the perfect way to cover those up.

Day 12 - Festoon
- We'll now be creating a festoon, and, basically, it's a bunch of fruits, flowers, greens gathered up and bound at the top. When I was in Amsterdam recently, I was in the Rijksmuseum, and many of the Dutch masters painted festoons, and I fell in love. I'm starting with a sketch just to get the lay of the land. So, remember, a festoon is like an upside down swag. So I'm just going to draw a very, very loose swag. in almost like an almond shape. And then all the flower stems and everything will kind of poke out at the top. And we'll kind of draw in two little, I don't know what we call them, Cs? To represent a piece of ribbon or something that is binding the festoon so that we know, we don't want to go outside of the shape too, too much. And that's really it to get started. You wanna choose fresh elements that kind of have that hanging quality. So we have these, what are these called? Champagne grapes? I don't know, something like that. Something to give the effect, that's too much, that things are hanging from above. Let's start painting in some of the stems at the top. Any old green will do. I remember, in the one painting, there was this beautiful silky blue ribbon that was used to bind the festoon together. It was so stunning, so we're gonna go with blue. And I'm gonna make some big, sweeping leaves coming down from the bottom of the ribbon. Press down, lift up. Lots of color, lots of pigment. Those are the same things. Lots of color, lots of water on your brush. Festoons are how folks would decorate. They would go and forage for items that were beautiful, berries and pine boughs, and bind them all together, hang them on the front door. I'm not liking how the end of this is sticking out, so we'll snip it off and tuck it underneath some of these grapes, I think. There we go. And let's just continue the grapes in watercolor. Always wanna leave a little bit of white. Anything, grape, berry, tomato. Don't always leave the white in the same place. And just play. I love this dahlia. I want to use it so badly, and so I'm hoping it looks like it belongs. There we go. Love that curve and how that just feels so perfect. Gonna pull this out, paint in a little bit of greenery back there. There we go. Maidenhair fern. Couldn't be more perfect for something like this. Any kind of fern is gonna look phenomenal. Don't be afraid to make leaves in an unexpected color. I mixed a little bit of purple in with my green and it created this beautiful, rusty maroon. Hm. Some more grapes. Sometimes it can be really hard to see over the piece that you've laid down, so having a hard time seeing up here. The grapes, you can stand up, you can snap a photo. Whatever works. Just adding in some extra pieces. Make that area feel a little more full. I really wanna use this dahlia, but obviously it's way too big. So, don't panic. It's worth it. And you can use all these gorgeous petals somewhere else. I promise. Cutting off some of this, which is getting in my way. Now it's the perfect size. And because we all now know that I'm in love with the blue ribbon that I saw on the painting at the museum, we just have to extend it a little bit. Broad side of your brush and just make a nice swoop. Simple swoop. Put a little tail on the end. Pencil's showing through in the original band that I made, so let's put it back in here a little. Give it that continuity. Nothing wrong with going into wet watercolor with pencil. Festoons are so fun to paint.

Day 13 - "Hi" with scraps
- We'll be painting another word, but just using simple block lettering, so we'll have a lot more

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opportunity to use bigger blooms, and buds and berries and just have a lot of fun with it. Again, I'm gonna sketch using the word "hi." Just a fun word, simple word. And an exclamation point, of course. So let's start by placing some of your favorite elements. Sometimes you can literally force open a bloom, like these. There's something really cool about this process, because you kind of get to know plants, and flowers and fruits a little better, and know what they're made of, really, and explore their parts. I love it. Love those little tomatoes, so I'm gonna paint a couple. And, of course, where would we be without a few beautiful leaves that are just so fun to paint. I'm just mixing up a really dark purple and tucking in a couple of the berries. This composition is definitely not as delicate as the first word piece that we did earlier. Cutting the thistle off at the base. I don't want any of these little spiky bits. Oh, that didn't work. Just snip those off. I find it very helpful to have a variety of greens, floral, fruit and veg, just at your disposal, really doesn't have to be anything fancy, but variety is really the key. So you have a lot to choose from, so you don't feel like you're constantly grabbing for something that you don't have. You can literally forage in your houseplants. Take little pieces here and there and you won't even know they're gone. So let me tell you about a little something called a happy accident. My berry just splashed on the page and created spatter with berry juice, and I kinda dig it, so we're gonna roll with it. Let's see, what can we do? Exclamation point. Let's paint a border. I'm using the broad edge of the brush and making a really casual frame. Gotta own these little happy accident moments and turn them into something amazing.

Day 14 - Ice cream cone
- I'm approaching this one a little bit differently. I'm gonna sketch and then we're gonna paint and then we're gonna sprinkle some flowers onto our ice cream cone. Starting with the sketch just center on the page a simple cone. I'm kinda thinking waffle cone. Go ahead and get rid of any marks that you don't think you really need. And then just a little bit to guide you with the ice cream swirls. Think of it kind of like ocean waves hugging one another. Gonna do a rainbow cone. Well, rainbow ice cream. So let's paint with water first. I have an idea, hm. And let's start. You're just doing a stroke next to a stroke. And our cone. Think we need a cherry on top. I'll make this one look a little bit like a waffle cone so some line work. Nothing super detailed. Just a little bit of texture. Some shadows. Now, here's the fun part and this portion of the process really lends itself to being filmed. So it'd make a great Boomerang for Instagram or a great video for Facebook or whatever you wanna do. So just start pulling some of the petals off and sprinkle. Everybody loves sprinkles. You could even use real sprinkles. Whatever you do, just have a blast.

Day 15 - Swag
- This is definitely the most subdued palette so far. We're gonna be using Queen Anne's lace, thistle, and a seeded eucalyptus. And let's just start placing some flowers. I'm eventually going to be placing some of this eucalyptus, but first I just wanna paint some in. Take the soft blue, and just add a touch of green, see how you feel about it, oh yeah, that's pretty. It's like a celery green, almost. Broad side of the brush, press and pull up. Press and pull up. I'm just gonna make a cluster painted, kind of pointing up towards the Queen Anne's lace. I can't forget the little touches of red. And clean water on the brush to soften and blend. Let's paint in a couple thistle. Really this is just linework. Getting these leaves in. Just press and pull up, press and pull up. Add just a smidge of green out towards the tips. And maybe a little more blue. Thistle's a tough one. Is it blue, is it purple, is it blue, is it purple, I don't know. And now let's add some eucalyptus. I'm gonna snip these apart so I can

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really get them exactly where I want them. Yup, that one's done. Gosh, that one looks like it's been painted. (chuckles) That makes me wonder. Let's see if we can have another happy accident. Gonna paint the leaf. Uh-huh. That's awesome. So you can get some really cool effects, apparently, by painting eucalyptus leaves. Love it. Pulling apart the Queen Anne's lace, and just covering up those awkward connections of all those eucalyptus stems, softening that up a bit. And then I'm gonna go ahead and paint some eucalyptus along this edge. And I'm just using the broad side of the brush. Changed up the color a little. Let's add in some of the seeds. Gonna go back in the thistle, and add some texture. Add some more thistle. Adding some more eucalyptus right up in here. I don't like how these are both almost exactly the same size, so we're gonna trim it up. Add a little paint for continuity, just because we learned that we can. (chuckles) Mm. And let's add some more linework up here. Little dots on those seeds to give them some dimension, in a darker green. And I feel like I need to brighten this up over here a little bit. So I'm adding in, it is a different type of flower. Brighter white. But it works. And, finish up some detailing in the thistle over here.

Day 16 - Imaginary landscape
- Today, we'll be creating an imaginary landscape surrounded by flowers. So when creating your imaginary landscape, you really wanna think about your foreground, your middle ground, and your background. I'm just going to lightly sketch in some very simple mountains. And this is kind of a horizon line for the water. And I'm gonna have a bigger mountain coming down here on the side, and that's gonna kinda be my middle ground. And then my foreground, just gonna kinda make a swoop right in the foreground here, at an angle. So, if you can imagine, big cliff here, rolling, distant mountains here, fading off, and this area in here is our water. And up here, foreground. That's pretty much it. Let's get some color on there. I'm just gonna start by painting clean water. Make sure your brush is clean, mine wasn't totally clean, it's all good. Little tip, as you see mountains in the distance, that kind of hazy, blue-purpley color is what we call atmospheric perspective, and it basically just means things in the distance look blue and purple. To simplify the concept greatly. So I'm gonna get some blue in there, and some wash in some purple. This is your wet-in-wet technique. Some pigments will explode more when they hit water, and some are kinda lazy, and they just hang around. So don't be startled, don't think you're doing something wrong, necessarily, when you see that happening. I'm gonna go over to the cliff, here. I'm gonna just use some big, broad, vertical strokes to kind of create a majestic, tall feel. The point isn't to get super detailed, or super-realistic here, you're just kind of creating a moment, a snapshot of the scene. I'm using like a blue-gray. You can really use up what I call the muddy corners of your palette. It's where all the paint kind of collects, and all the colors collect in a corner, and it creates just a really lovely, rich gray. Using this broad tip, so I'm not using the whole side, I'm just using the broad tip right here. And don't worry about going out all the way to the edges, because we're gonna fill around here with flowers. Maybe I'll add kind of a grassy part here, a little grassy hill. And just like you get that purpley-blue haze in the very distant background in a mountain scene, in the foreground, things tend to look a little more bright and yellow, so your greens can be a little more yellowy, and that will help the perspective of your painting. Yellow tones push everything forward, blue and purple tones push everything backward. And I haven't forgotten about the water, I promise, we'll get there. You can use line quality here, just like you would in any other painting, to create shape within the landscape, and movement. Little more definition here, I've just got a darker blue. I'm gonna run it across the bottom of these mountains. Not perfectly, not an outline, some clean water to blend. Gonna finish off this foreground here with some really bright yellows, and then let's head into the water. Now, everything

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up here is still wet, so don't get right up next to it unless you are okay with some major watercolor explosions. I'm using the broadest side of the brush. Now I'm gonna choose a blue that I can get really excited about, it's my brightest blue, just go for the brightest blue on your palette. If you want to keep things subdued, use a different blue. I'm loading up again. Now I'm rinsing my brush, I'm going into my clean water container, and just putting clean water underneath again, and again, and again, until I get that subtle spread that I want down to the bottom, here, or the top of the foreground. Gonna add a little bit of a different blue here at the top, for some depth. And a little bit of wet and damp line work. Trying to pull a little bit more of that blue, there we go, down here. Perfect. I'm gonna go back into the cliff here, with some line work, just to give it a little bit more structure. So mix up a rich gray, it can be taking a blue and an orange and mixing it together. Opposites on the color wheel are gonna muddy each other out, so a blue and an orange together are gonna create kind of a muddy gray. Let's see. Some really light marks here. Again, using my pinky on the page to anchor and steady my hand. Dabbing in some darker pigment into the wet areas I just created. There's some really beautiful explosive areas up here that are drying, and I really don't wanna cover those up, so I'm taking some care to let those breathe, and be. All right, let's work in a little sky. Gonna take almost clean water, and again paint in, I'm not going right up next to those mountains, leaving a little bit of white space. I'm not gonna worry about trying to paint clouds, I want this to be a stress-free, relaxing painting experience, and clouds, my friends, are stressful, so let's just avoid them for now. And some blue. Just start dropping it in, broad side of your brush. Scrub a little bit, wiggle your brush back and forth. You can go with a little bit of darker blue here and there, or not. If you get lucky, you get something that looks like a cloud. Call it a good day. Don't need much to get a convincing sky. I personally love all these little moments where the color starts to explode, and starts to dry, and you get all these cool textures. I personally don't wanna cover those up, but you may wanna add some more line work. Gonna do a little bit more definition in the background, in the mountains. Just a touch. Now we're ready for flowers. I selected a variety of flowers here, specifically for their color. A lotta whites, a lotta greens, touches of purple. So let's start arranging. When you start to arrange, think about this is your foreground. I love the idea of almost creating what's gonna feel like a real bush or a collection of plants in the foreground of this scene. So not necessarily just flowers laying on top of the page. So I might even go in and paint in some bush-like textures and shapes to help that come across. Leaves are definitely gonna be helpful here, smaller leaves for sure. Remember, you can cut your leaves down. Play Mother Nature a little bit. And then as I'm working, I'm thinking about framing the landscape. Whoops. Just picking up any old green. Adding some very simple leaf shapes to kind of start crawling up the edge here. And these can appear elsewhere, for continuity. This is a great exercise in composition, figuring out where to put what, so it looks good, visually pleasing. It's a great beginner exercise in perspective. So these leaf shapes, repeated throughout, start to act as a decorative border of sorts. Don't be afraid to let the flowers know who's boss. I'm gonna paint in some of these berries, here. And just open up the bloom a little bit. I love these berries. Snip a bunch off so I can use them throughout. Oh, they're such a sweet little detail. Something to think about when you're choosing your flowers, you wanna have a nice balance of small, tiny, delicate little bits, and larger leaves, bigger blooms, medium size of both as well. Just mix things. Keeps things interesting, not repetitive and expected. If the idea of coming up with an imaginary landscape from thin air stresses you out, not to worry, just head on to Google, and find a reference image that you can use, and feel good about.

Day 17 - White blooms

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- This composition is all about white blooms, beautiful leaves, and I will be building one of the flowers from paper. I'm going to start with a few individual white blooms here from this stem. It's very common that these flowers will start shedding onto your paper, and it's important to keep that paper clean. This guy's got a little browning going on, I'm gonna get rid of that. Never underestimate the usefulness of a random collection of little buds. Pieces that you think are trash, take a look at them again. Usually, they can be so incredibly useful. I like this piece, but it's not fitting right now, so I'm gonna just put it off to the side, and let's paint a couple of white blooms. White is the one color that gives people heart palpitations in watercolor. But I like to simplify it and think about it like this, white isn't white, it's shadows. And white also becomes more white, depending on what color you surround it with. So right now, I'm using a very soft blue-gray, lots of water on the brush, not a lot of pigment. I'm just making some petal shapes with the tip of my brush. Right now, it kinda looks like a blue-gray flower. It's all good. Let's start putting in some contrast. Black center. Starting to look a little bit more like a white flower. Let's paint in some leaves. With darker green. Just mix up some green, you can use a little black. My watercolor teacher from grade school would probably cringe, with me telling you to use black to make the color darker, but it's okay. And there you go. Let's get some leaves in there. Press down, lift up. Do it again right next to the first mark, press down, lift up. You're not gonna be able to do a full leaf right in here, so just do a little bit. You can bring it out at the top. Little wispy marks. Press down, lift up. Press down, lift up. A couple of dark green marks in between each petal. And there you have your white flower. Let's keep building. Remember, heat up the leaf, the stem, whatever it is just with the warmth of your fingers, and it'll be a little bit more malleable. Perfect. I'm gonna bring in a little bit of brighter, cheerful green, some big leaves over here. Love a little bit of unexpected color. Clean water to move things around. Little more unexpected color. Little more water. If you ever feel like an area is too textured, like for example right here, part of me is like, "Oof, it's looking a little too textured." Get some clean water and drop it onto the area that you feel is too noisy, too textured, and it will smooth it out a little. It'll diffuse all of that pigment, and smooth it. There you go. Always thinking, what do I wanna do next? Paint, add more fresh floral? Add some paper flowers, perhaps? And I think that's where we're headed. Okay. I have some scrap paper here, and I'm going to just start cutting some petal shapes that mimic that white flower that I painted, just on a larger scale. Just remember when you're cutting, you move the paper, not your scissor hand. I'm gonna do five of these. You wanna start thinking about what is gonna be your flower center. Will it be painted? Will it be something fresh? I wanna paint some linear details on here, add some line work. I'm gonna do that while they're flat, gonna let them dry, and then do some curling. Whoa. So I'm just gonna mix up, I have a little bit of green on my palette here, a real soft green, adding a touch of gray to it. And I'm just adding really thin lines. Barely can see it, it's just a whisper of color. For some interest, I'm gonna take that brighter, more cheerful green that I used before, and just paint right on the tip. You're holding this petal in your hand, it can feel very precarious. Notice I have my pinky finger resting on the pointer finger of my other hand. Anywhere that feels comfortable, just to give yourself a little bit of steadiness. Definitely don't want each of these to look exactly the same as the previous. So make some thicker marks, leave some extra white area. I'm gonna do all thin lines on this one. Building paper flowers is super-fun, but it is also a great way to develop control over your hands. What I call muscle memory. What everybody calls muscle memory (chuckles). I didn't make it up. That's where your hands, your muscles, everything kind of remembers what to do, and is feeling strong and secure in these movements that you need to make to paint, and to sculpt, and to create. Okay, those are done. Now that each petal is dry, I'm gonna go ahead and give them a little bit of shape

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using my brush. Just kinda press it in and around the barrel of the brush. Doesn't have to be a perfect curl, just so it's not flat anymore. Let's see. Be patient with yourself, figure out really where the best place would be for this beautiful little paper bloom. Oh, so pretty. And then we need a center. I'm gonna try this, I'm not sure it's gonna work, when I cut it, it may fall apart. Taking the center out of one of these white flowers. Let's see. I don't think it's gonna sit nicely. And it did. Don't sneeze. Not the time. Okay, let's add some more greenery. Gonna do a little bit more of a wispy, kinda feathery, fern-like piece. Started with a long stroke, and kept shortening the strokes as I went along. See them over here, that the strokes in general are smaller and shorter. A little mini-version down here. And let's put some of that same feathery business up here. Couple more leaves. Let's paint in a stem for that leaf. And then attach it to the stem. Some shadows, and remember the shadows you can just use the softest blue. A little bit of blue pigment, a lot of water, and just follow the shadows that are already existing. And you can even add shadows to your paper bloom, really mess with people who look at this (chuckles). Get in there ever so carefully. Adjust. I think I'm gonna add one more larger leaf up here. A little bit of the happy green, whatever I called it. A little bit of line work there. I just love the simplicity of this layout.

Day 18 - Subdued wreath

- I'm really jazzed about today, we're gonna be creating a wreath of hellebore. Hellebore, or Lenten rose, as they are sometimes called. Actually in my part of the country, which is Pennsylvania, they bloom right through the snow. I'm gonna start by tracing a circle, because there's no point in getting stressed out by making a perfect circle. So really lightly, don't press hard. I'm using some masking tape on a roll. There we have it, so we can follow that along, and have a beautiful symmetrical circle in the end. Gonna start by placing a few key flowers. A great thing about hellebore is that even when they're very near the end of their life, their lifespan being very long (chuckles), they still look pretty good. So, I just adore working with them for that reason. I've been eyeing up this dahlia, which has some crispy petals on it, but don't throw it away. Just pluck the ugly petals away, and use it. Something you'll learn about this process is flowers have a lot of life in them, if you just think about plucking away the dead bits, fluffing them up a little. Maybe they're not vase worthy, but they most definitely are watercolor fragment worthy. Just spread this out a little bit. Look at that, brand-new flower. I am going to create a paper hellebore, so I'm gonna get started on that right now. Hellebore petals are like wonky teardrops. So start skinny at the bottom, and flare out pretty well at the sides, and come back skinny at the top. And there you have it. Five is the magic number again. I'm gonna go with this soft green, with touches of a, oh the best word for it, would be a mauve. I'm gonna start with a soft green, kind of all over. And then we'll mix up a muted pink, which can just be a pink with a little bit of green in it. Pink and green, opposites on the color wheel, will make each other more muddy and muted. And I'm just kinda putting that in the middle of the petal, and then I added some brighter pink. This is pretty wet, so I'm not going to recommend that you put it back down on your page. Bring in a piece of scrap, and let it dry there. Definitely don't want each one to be the same, like in nature. Gonna let those dry, and continue to place some flowers around the wreath, and paint in some leaves around the wreath. Just some wispy bits. I like the shape of that bud here, I'm gonna create another one over here. A little too much pigment on the brush. Maybe another right next to it. And one more coming down a bit. (paintbrush tings) I'll come back to those later. Some bigger leaves down here. (paintbrush tings) Need some vibrancy in these leaves a little bit. Can always remove, put it back. And let's add some more live elements. Open this up just a little. Find pieces that naturally seem to follow the curve of your circle. You can

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trim stems, so they're not so thick. Just go right to the bottom of the stem and lightly trim it out. Ah, that's nice. (paintbrush tings) (paintbrush tings) So I'm making a little bit of a pink petal come out of this bud. Or at least making it appear that way. (paintbrush tings) Gonna add some pink up here. (paintbrush tings) And a little definition on the green. That green's too bright, so I'm just taking some orange and toning it down. Too much, so I'm blotting. Some nice line work. Barely using the tip of my brush. I'm adding in a pretty dark area, to really give some definition. Clean-ish water on the brush, and blend. I want a little more pink in this bloom, so I'm gonna try to paint it. I've mentioned before, you never really know what's gonna happen when you try to paint something that comes from nature. But you can always try. That's so funny, it turned purple. (laughs) (paintbrush tings) I love it. Let's see, I just want some pink in there. You can dab it in there, and then you can go in and try to smooth it out with your hands. Yeah. And that gives you just a little touch of pink. I don't like this one there anymore, so I'm gonna move it, tuck that in next to the dahlia. And then bring that over here. All right, our paper petals are dry. Let's give 'em a little curl, make sure your brush is clean and dry, and then let's curl them. Not too much. And some maybe just on the tip. I'm gonna put it down here, 'cause I feel like if I put it up here, it'll just unbalance everything, it'll just feel too top-heavy. So let this area here become a focal point. It can be a little unruly, it's okay. Holding down the center where all the petals meet, and I can adjust each a little bit more. Just be careful when you let go, 'cause that'll happen. (chuckles) And then we need to decide what our center will be. I think I'm gonna use this as my center. Gonna trim off a little bit. Yeah, it's gonna need some love. This is a point, you just need to stay patient, and know that it's gonna take some zhuzhing, and that things are gonna just move around and probably be a little annoying for a moment. Well, and there you have it. But just stay with it. If things are really moving around, and not the way you want them to, stop using your hands, perhaps. Bring in a brush, bring in the tip of your scissors, get a little more precision. But that's looking really good. And let's finish off this wreath with some beautiful painted bits. Sometimes it doesn't have to be a leaf, it can just be some really pretty marks that finish a wreath. And the last check I wanna do, is to make sure all of my pencil lines are covered. And I'm just using little tiny dots to accomplish that. I'm gonna add a few touches of line work in here. Ever so gently, 'cause see things will start to move, but it's worth it, 'cause it's pretty. Your finished wreath, after you've taken a photograph, is awesome if you love to post inspirational quotes on Facebook or Instagram, like I do. So just take it into an app, pop some text in the middle, and resave the image.

Day 19 - Berries and leaves

- Today is all about berries and beautiful leaves. We're gonna start with painting today and I'm gonna use these gooseberries as my subject matter. So, start with some clean water, a darker yellow. This composition I'm thinking is just gonna be kinda freeform. So my initial painting is gonna be very loose, very general beginning strokes. I wanna go a little more bold with the painting style today. Get a nice cluster of these. Think I might do about seven of them. Make those touching. Just making a lazy circle. And then add the green in. Some beautiful raspberries which will immediately stain your paper so just be a little bit more sure about where you're putting them down. Let's add some painted leaves. A really simple shape. Couple of strokes. No more bold. I love this piece, it's from a succulent. I'm gonna just slim out that bottom of the stem, cut it at an angle so it looks a little bit more elegant. And we've seen these time and time again, apparently I'm in love with them, so. They add just a fun whimsical kind of vibe. Gonna paint one of these somewhere on the page. Maybe as if it were coming out of this spray. Just gonna move this for now so it's not in my way.

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Make sure your brush is clean so your yellow doesn't look yellow-green. And let's paint. Watch where your hand is, I just dropped my pinky finger in my gooseberry. We'll cover that up later. Again, really bold, I'm simplifying all of my marks. I'm gonna extend this stem down and kind of intertwine it with these berries. I'm really trying to match that color nicely so when the final photograph is taken it really flows and tricks the eye. Is that a real stem or is it painted? Make a little bit of red maybe. Yeah, perfect. Let's do a painted raspberry. Start with just kinda straightforward red and kind of sketch out the raspberry with your brush. Some dotted texture. And some greens. Beautiful succulent petals. Let's just make ourselves a little succulent here. A simple leaf shape in green and then we'll come back and add some of the red texture. I think we need a center here. Maybe I'll steal one of these, see how it feels. Oh yeah, that's fine. Let's add a little more depth with a darker green. I have these grapes but I'm not sure if I wanna use them. Just because they're grapes doesn't mean they have to stay grapes, they can become something else. These are just fun little berries now on a vine. Add a little bit more of a stem. Pop one more in there. Sorry. Still need one up here. Just gonna pop a few of these real berries around. A little bit of green. Kinda fun. Maybe I'll find a real leaf. Definitely gonna have to trim one of these down. Great time to take a photo, see where you're at, see if you wanna change anything. Something fun with berries. Especially raspberries. Is to paint a few little dots in a very unexpected column. Start with white, so you have a nice base and then go in with a fun pink in this case. Very random. Fun and unexpected, it's like a painted on highlight. And purposely not going back in to add too much line work because I like this kind of bold vibe we have going on. I'm actually going with some black touches to give some really fun punches of contrast. Just some fun little random black circles. Woops. I'll put it back together. Think I need maybe two more gooseberries over here and we will be done. Maybe three. Maybe I'll add, need a little somethin'. Sprinkle in a little bit of texture. And one last thing I promised. A little spatter. I'm going bold, I'm going black. (tapping) Adding touches of black at the end of a piece where you just feel like it needs a little something can be so powerful.

Day 20 - Magnolia

- We are about to make one flower out of another. We're going to be creating a pink magnolia out of dahlias. First thing we need is a stem. We'll save that for later. I'm gonna cut this down a little bit. I like to cut the bottom of the stem at an angle, just looks nicer in the photo. A little shorter. I'm gonna be using some of these incredible pointy dahlia petals, just need to pull a bunch out. Try to keep them whole. We're also going to be using some paper to create the larger petals. Let's see if we can get a couple out at a time. Beautiful. Let's start with that. Just start placing, see how it feels. Magnolias are these, kind of, floppy, graceful, large-petaled blooms. So we have to kinda mimic that look with these smaller petals. Let's get a big brush stroke in there. I think that'll make me feel better about life. Get another one in, off to the side. Wet on dry this time. There you go. Let's start with a paper petal. I'm just gonna cut it fairly long. The shape isn't terribly important, as long as it's a little bit pointed at one end. Something like that. Let's roll it first, because this one is gonna take awhile to dry once it's painted. So let's do a little bit of a roll. Yeah, something like that. And let's paint it. Placing it on top of the stem, just to give that a little bit of a better look. Let's bring in a leaf. Let's paint a leaf first, actually. Lift up. Lots of pressure, lift up. Fill in with some of your paint water. Now lay that over top. Other way. Nice. I'm gonna do another paper petal. Smaller this time. I think that's about, yup, the right size. I'm gonna curl it in, on the shorter edge instead of on the long. Which means we're gonna need to paint a little bit of this side as well. I'm not getting too much moisture on this because I wanna go right in with a little bit of linear line mark. Blowing on it a little bit to dry

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it up. And. A little bit of green at the bottom. Just show where the flower would connect to the center, where it most likely would be a little green. Gonna need my scissors in here to bully things into place. There we go. Couple bits of green. And a little green on the brush, and a little green and red, it works. The line work. A little line work up here. Oops. And then a little here. Lines like these that are in a curve really help give some volume and shape to whatever it is that you're painting. There's our magnolia. And don't forget to save your paper petals. You can use them in future paintings.

Day 21 - Succulent
- Today is all about succulents. We're gonna use paper, paint, of course and some succulent petals. We'll start by placing the center. Just gonna create one succulent. This is the perfect center, but really, you can use so many different things. I mean you can just snag a little cutting from one of your houseplants and luckily, you can use the pieces to propagate more later on. They won't go to waste, I promise. Okay. I'm gonna paint a few on. I'm just mixing a nice icy green. I'm not really trying to mimic any particular type of succulent. I guess we'll call it an imaginary succulent. Maybe a few dabs of blue and then we'll smooth it out with some clean water on the brush. There we go. Now on to the paper succulents. Really very much like a leaf shape. You could do some that have a point, get a little bit wider and then thin out a bit again. If you're unsure, you could always pull up some references on your phone for succulents so you could see different shapes. Or you could just wing it. I'm not gonna roll these. I want them to stay pretty flat, but we are gonna paint them. I'm gonna mimic these a little bit with the red edges. And then place them as we go. Placing of these can be a little tricky. There's gonna be a lot of layering and building. Don't be afraid to switch up the colors a little bit. We are mimicking something in nature. I've cut a few more petals and now I'm gonna add a few more fresh. I may just add one more right now. Nah, two more. I'm a real stickler about odd numbers if you haven't noticed. And let's keep painting these paper petals. And it's really okay, as you're painting these, for your fingers to touch the wet paint. Nothing wrong with a really colorful, unexpected petal. At this stage, things really may start to dance as you introduce new elements. It's okay, try to keep it under control. Really mixing up the colors here. No, I don't like that there. Lifting up this petal, this paper petal to fit in another live one. Great spot to take a photo, see how things are looking from above. Might be fun to add in a leaf and try to disguise it as a succulent petal. See how that looks. Why not? It's hard to know when to paint, when to use a real flower, when to use a paper petal. I just really, two things, listen to my instinct, one and two, try to keep a balance of painted, paper and fresh. The only last thing I might do here is add a little more intensity to a few of the edges just for some definition. And that's going just on the paper. Things'll move a little. It's okay. Can readjust. There you go.

Day 22 - Rockscape
- For this one, you're gonna need to go on a scavenger hunt. You'll need rocks, dirt, and even some moss. I've got some rocks, and we're gonna start by placing those on the page. The idea is that we're creating kind of a scene featuring a cliff, or a rock overhang, or anything you wanna call it. So eventually we're gonna add a little foreground, we're gonna add a little sky. So let's see where these rocks kind of look their best. There. Let's start tucking in some greens. The idea is for the greenery you choose to kind of be growing in between the rocks, and hanging down. And let's do a little painting. Maybe we'll paint in a rock even, as well. Just kind of tuck it behind. And some shading on the top, with the broad side of your brush. Bring it around the front. That looks good, we'll let that

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dry, come back a little later with some line work. And some foreground. Just some scratchy marks, nothing terribly specific. Using the kind of tip of my brush on an angle. Using a brown peachy tone, already existing on my palette. Maybe a little hint of green, right at the base of the rocks. I've got some maidenhair fern. Can get a little tricky, because obviously we want the fern to look like it's growing out from behind the rock, and coming overtop. So lift this up a little, tuck a piece back underneath, and then kind of warm up those leaves, hopefully they'll stay where you want them to. That's pretty good. Little bit of moss. Keep the moss away from your page, because it will make one heck of a mess. So do any moss tearing off to the side. Could even paint a little bit mountains in the background, just to give this a little context. Really just using the tip of my brush for that. Maybe a few flowers growing up behind. I'm going to extend the stem, so we can have a taller flower. Just move that out of the way for a little bit. Little bit down here. And then reconnect. Little bit of darker touch right there. And blend. I have a little dirt, so let's get some in there. Don't go crazy with the dirt. No need. Tidy up the dirt. That's just kind of funny. Let's give a little more definition to that rock we painted first. Not too much paint. Maybe a few pebbles on the ground. If you've got a little dirt in your paint, it's really okay. All is well, go with it. This could be a great journaling exercise when you travel. Every place you stop, every other place you stop to create a little scene like this. Grab a snapshot, would be a great thing to add to a photo album after your trip. Pulling up some of that pigment, to really give the shadow some oomph. And just a touch of darkness. And let's just do a hint of sky. Wet on wet, wetting the page first. I'm not gonna go too bold. Touch more. Little shadow. If you do decide to travel journal this way, please just leave behind the rocks.

Day 23 - Cactus

- We are working with cactus today, so safety first. You want to either wear gloves, or make sure you're using some type of plier or tong. To get started, I am gonna move the notebook out of the way. Because once I start cutting the cactus, the little spines are gonna get everywhere. First things first, I need this nice column-like piece to free itself. So, yep, I'm gonna cut it right off. It's super soft, so, not a worry. I know this seems really weird, but trust me, all this weirdness is gonna pay off. This piece, we really need it to lay flat on the page, so I'm gonna slice it lengthwise. The scissors work perfectly. It's softer than a cucumber, believe it or not. And here we go. I'm gonna cut these little babies in half as well, so they lay nice and flat. So you're just placing them kind of where you'd like. Eventually, you're gonna be painting flowers on top, painting in some cactus parts. So you just kinda want to be thinking where you want those things to land, in general. All right, let's do some painting. I'm gonna extend this here underneath. Try to match up the colors. It's picking up a little bit of the cactus goo, my watercolor. It's okay. 'Kay, let's let that dry a little. And this one. So essentially, we're creating another kind of landscape with a beautiful cactus growing up out of the ground. If at this point, you feel like adding in a little bit of ground will help you visualize, by all means. I have some spines here that I can see. If you want to try to blow them away, if they're making you nervous, (blows) by all means. And then this one here, I'm connecting with the main stalk. Doesn't have to be perfect. We just want it to connect. 'Kay, great. Little bit of interest with a brown ochre tone. All right, let's get in there and paint a big cactus flower. Be too worried about the shape, using the broad side of the brush, but just on the edge, that's what's giving me that kind of ragged edge. I'm going around and around until I like the shape and the silhouette. Little bit of yellow, I'm doing it right away on purpose, so some bleeding happens. Let's bring in a real flower for the main stalk of the cactus, but I want to have some fun and really paint this one. Let's see what happens. I want it to be much brighter and bolder. The petals definitely resist the paint. Most petals do. But you can kind

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of scrub on the color, force it to soak in. Let it bubble up on the surface. Get a lot of paint on your brush. And you'll start to see the color change a little bit. Can even work it in with your fingers. There we go. It's really changing the color of the flower. So we've made that a little more intense, little bit more. Let's lay it on. Yeah. Please don't be afraid to get dirty. It's where some of the best moments happen. I don't like the way this is bleeding over here, so I'm gonna scoop up with a clean brush and then reapply some yellow. 'Kay. Some more flowers. Honestly, maybe just one there. And we can add some pink strokes right in behind it to bring it to life. Whoop! That's funny. Beautiful succulent bloom, just gonna slice it down the middle, hope that it stays intact, and it sure did. Ah! This is the most eclectic cactus there ever was! I love it! Gonna trim this other half, see if I can't use it somewhere else. Let's get some sky in. Whoop! That's all right. Little dirty water never hurt anyone. Just wetting the page, and let's get some really bold blue in and around. For those of you who love watercolor explosions, this is your time. Can feel a little tricky to get in and around. Just take your time. If you run into another color, don't panic. In most cases, it just adds interest. Keep a wet edge over here. A wet edge is basically where you stop painting, and it's the edge that has the potential to dry and create a really rough line. And you don't want that really to happen until you're ready for it to happen with watercolor. Like over here, this edge is drying, and I'm okay with it. I like the way it looks. But over here, I wanted to keep things going smoothly down to the foreground, so you have to keep that edge wet. And now I'm gonna get into these little tough areas. Let's wet the page first, make our life a little easier. A little bit more foreground here and I think some spatter. Now, remember, spatter will definitely travel, so realize that a little bit might go up into the sky. You can keep your brush a little closer to the page to control that. You can spatter slowly to control that. I do see, I want to do a little bit more on the cactus here to kinda blend the real cactus with the painted cactus, just some marks, a little bit more intensity of color, a little bit of line work. 'Kay. If you did happen to get some cactus spines in your hands, no fear, just take a little bit of duct tape, place it on your skin, and pull it off quickly. They'll come right out.

Day 24 - Colorful wreath

- Let's call this the random wreath. You might have a bunch of bits and pieces laying around, clippings. And you think they don't have any use. Put them on the table, and see what happens. I'm gonna start by placing some key elements. I think I really want down here to be kind of my focal point, be a little heavier, a little more flourished, and then the rest of the wreath will be a little less busy. Let's paint in a smaller version of this, up here. Maybe even, yeah, a side view. Just using the tip of my brush. Kind of making little loopy motions, like that. And some berries, because it just wouldn't be a painting of mine, if it didn't have berries. Making little Cs at the center of all those berries. Sometimes you have to move things around a couple of times before it lays right. I don't really like that there, let's get rid of it. I'm gonna add some more of those berries down here. Really like the way they feel. Remove that for a little bit. Let's add a couple of leaves. Make this area feel a little fuller, really small, precise leaves. Just a hint of darkness on the ends. I wanna keep things pretty simple up here. Just wanna be careful not to go too wild. Cover up those pencil lines. A little texture on this side view of a flower. I love these little tomatoes, I'm really hoping I can make them work. And I'm basically gonna add a painted version of these to complete the wreath. Lots of little textural marks to start, all in the same color. And then we'll go back in, and give them some life. And then let's get some green tones in there. Just making little ovals, open not filled. Great time to take a shot. See if you feel like the circle has lost its shape in any way. If it has, you can always add in little wispy bits. Let's do some shadows. Not shadows, but just a few marks to fill in space, you always

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wanna just be looking for balance. Especially with wreaths, you don't want them to feel misshapen in any way. You'll never get it perfect, perfect, but... Gonna add a couple more flourishes. A couple little things trailing down here and there. If you really want that perfect circle, just keep adding, subtracting, taking a few snapshots in between, checking your snapshots, and you'll get there.

Day 25 - Zinnias
- Today we're creating a cluster of zinnias: a real zinnia, a painted one, and of course the paper zinnia. Let's start with placing the live zinnia. See if that's flat enough. Work on that a little bit. All right, that'll do. Let's start cutting. I don't like to waste paper, so I just pulled a scrap to start with from one of our other days. Really don't wanna be perfect with this, and also just for the sake of really enjoying the process, just cut fast, get the petals out, get them done. Don't worry about them being perfect, 'cause if you take too much time with this, you're gonna get bored. Let's see. I wanna try to use this little pink guy as my center. It's all fallin' apart, but I think it could still work. Okay, let's pull some petals. They're pretty similar in shape, so I think it could work for just starting out. I'm gonna paint a couple, just to give some base color. And zinnia petals tend to be a little bit more I guess square at the tip. Sometimes with a little, let's call it a dimple, so keep that in mind as you're painting. Okay, let's paint some of these and get them on there. I'm gonna mix up a peachy tone to have on hand in my palette, a little bit of pink. So, just gonna start painting these and placing them right away. You're gonna be placing them right over, partially over top of the ones you just painted, kind of off-center. It's okay if they're kind of cantilevered, not flat. And just keep layering them on. You can add a little bit of shading with a red. Okay, I feel like I wanna get more of a yellow center in there, so let's see, hmm. So let's see what this does, besides make a huge mess, nice. Just back away, don't breathe on it. Can try to clean it up a little bit, but I don't wanna go crazy and disturb all those petals, 'cause as it is right now, it's pretty convincing, and let's put some more dahlia petals. Gonna need to snip the ends off, just like that. And I'll let that go for now, and I wanna move on to painting in a few leaves, and then the watercolor zinnia, just some simple leaves. No fuss, no muss. Okay. And the real one, let's do a yellow center. And let's start layering on some simple petals, one stroke each. Intensify that peach a little bit, go in between, one stroke each. I just added a little bit of red to that peach we mixed before. Let's go in the center with little tiny marks to define, some parts are wet and damp, and some are wet on dry, which gives you a nice variety of textures, and let's do a lighter version of that peach, mix in some of this nude watercolor. If you don't have a nude watercolor, just mix in some white watercolor. I'm gonna pull out some of this with wet, clean brush, lift it out. Lift it again, and blot. Lift it again, and blot. Now I'm gonna add a little bit more of a clean yellow. You can see where these petals in the real zinnia curl. You're almost seeing like a yellowish-green. I'm gonna try to mimic that with a few strokes. I just added some pure orange to the peach, and let's put a little bit of line-work definition in between some of these petals, just little touches. Gives a little bit of contrast. And let's fill in, and complete the composition with some greens, just some really pretty brush strokes here and there, nothing terribly defined, just a natural way to connect all of these blooms. This is a great approach for really studying a single species of flower, so why not try your favorite next?

Day 26 - Blueberries
- When painting, I treat fruit just like I would flowers. And so today we're gonna work with blueberries. They might be a little unruly on the page, but we'll have fun with it. First, I'm gonna create the branch. I'm just using a dahlia bud, snip that off. I like the curve of this stem, so let's start

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with that. And let's place a few blueberries. You wanna choose some that are smaller, some larger, get a nice variety of shape. Even grab one that has still a little bit of stem, definitely like those with the stem. Okay. Let's start to paint in some stems. I'm just gonna mix up kind of a vibrant brown, I guess you would call it. A little bit of green in the brown and let's see, just the tip of the brush making a really thin mark, you can thicken it up as you go, but don't start thick 'cause it's hard to come back from that. As you're painting these, you're thinking things like, where do I want the next branch to go? Where do I wanna place the blueberry? How is it kind of hanging from the main branch? Does it look as natural as I want it to look? These are the questions you can ask yourself. Be sure to reload your brush if you're feeling like the color is running out. I really feel like I need a leaf right now because this is just looking a little alien and I know it's gonna work out in the end, but sometimes when you're painting, you just have to jump prematurely to that next step so you can be feeling good about what's going on. I don't really want this to look alien right now. So let's get a few juicy leaves in there. It's one of my signature words, juicy watercolor, and it basically means when everything's flowing, the page is nice and wet, the colors are mingling. I'm just kind of going from memory, imagination, so on. You can work in line work as you're just painting the leaf in the very beginning if you'd like, it'll be more of a wet and wet, wet and damp situation. But pretty just the same. I think I'm gonna take one of these blueberries out, don't worry about that smudge and let's paint in a blueberry. Perfect, covered that right up. Gonna dry off my brush, reload just a little bit of water on the tip and grab another blue. Any blue is fine, just a different blue from what you originally used. Need something a little darker. You can dip in your black just a smidge. And float in a little bit of contrast. And I'm gonna paint another. They're just so fun. You can add the darker blue just outside of the edge of the blueberry and that will make sure that the color doesn't bleed so much into the first color you laid down. But if you put that darker blue right into the middle of the blueberry, it's gonna bleed like crazy. And I think I'm gonna add a little touch of green. I like where this is headed but I'm gonna start by painting a branch connecting over here. I'm painting kind of a very tentative line as I could call it. It's not perfect, it's got some bends and curves. Connect it with the other branch at kind of an angle, see how I'm going up here and meeting up with the stem? It just looks a little more more natural that way, you don't wanna connect it just straight on square. And let's get a blueberry over here. So sometimes and I'm sure you've run into this already, you've got pieces placed, blueberries, leaves, whatever it may be, and then you're trying to go in and paint nearby or around and it can be tricky. So pull it out, but sometimes there will be moments where you can't remove the item that's in your way. The best thing you can do then is hold your brush a little bit more perpendicular, straight up and down to the page. You won't have as much control but it'll help you to get around items that are quote unquote "in your way." I'm gonna go back down here, again, this blue is just taking over the whole berry in a way that I feel like it's too flat-looking. So I'm trying to lift out some highlights. Scrubbing a little, drying off my brush and lift. And let's get in here and put a little detail. Centers of blueberries or the tops of blueberries kinda look like cute little blue daisies almost. I'll come back to these later when they're dry and work that in. Let's add some paper details. So let's cut a smaller leaf out, simple shape, nothing too big. Let's curl it first. And then paint just choose a green that you love, that you think it's gonna look really good. I really love that kind of minty green that I've been using. And let's pop this in somewhere. Nice. Let's curl again. Love that minty green. Might wanna paint the outside just a little in case it shows. Let's put a little unexpected pop of something on the tip there. That's not unexpected enough. Remember, paint the way that makes you happy. That's what's important in my eyes, not the rules, not doing it the quote "right way." Do it the way that keeps you going, that keeps you moving, that keeps you

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motivated. Let's put some line work in these three painted leaves. A light stroke down the center, it doesn't have to be perfectly down the center. And then let's start with very light strokes, kind of curving out. This technique can be something you might practice for a while, get used to making these kind of linear directional kind of marks in different ways so you can use them. Okay, let's get a stem going over here. Connect those two. I have a fun idea, I love to paint in the shadows but what if we do the shadows in paper? Just to add a little bit of dimension. So I'm gonna cut kind of a lazy circle, don't want it to be perfect for sure. Get some shadow color going, just a soft blue gray. Let's see how this works. Maybe it'll be a bust, that one got away. Maybe it'll look cool. I'm kinda thinking it looks cool. Nice. Let's do this one. That's a little dark, we'll soften that up. I'm gonna need to paint a little leaf there to cover up my smudge. Get some detail in these. This one's still pretty wet so I'm just gonna do a dark center on that. A little bit of line work here, really tiny. And I'm gonna do, since I kind of love that shadow, paper shadow, I think I'm gonna do a paper blueberry. Remember, move the paper, not your cutting hand. Let's do a leaf over there. And another. Let's do some line work down on this leaf to kind of tie into these up here. And let's finish this branch in a little more of an elegant way. Maybe a leaf or two. I'm just adding in these kind of open leaves, they're fun, keep things feeling a little more airy. And I think this big guy, it looks like he needs to be painted. So remember this isn't for realism, this is for conversation, for fun. Just a little bit of white, a little bit of blue. Just adds that little je ne sais quoi. Take a last look around, see if there's anything else you wanna detail. Do a little shadow over here and I think that'll be about it.

Day 27 - Wild rose

- Today I have this lovely rose, and I'm going to pull it all apart and replace it with paper petals. So let's get into it. So, we're starting with a rose. It's nearing the end of its life, and I've been working to open it, so just kind of this action. Don't want to go too hard or it'll really start to break apart. But then next, what we're going to do is start plucking out the petals. Just want to make this a little more sparse. And we're going to replace these pulled-out petals with paper. Be careful not to go too far because it will start to fall apart. All right. Let's leave it at that, and start cutting some petals. Scrap paper is great. Rose petals are going to be pretty large. And they have really beautiful, kind of curved edges, so keep that in mind as you're creating them. I like to come to a little bit of a point on some of them. And don't worry too much about what your bottom looks like because it's going to get buried into the center of the flower. Let's go ahead and curl this before we paint. Make sure your brush is clean and dry. And let's just curl the edges a little bit. And here. You can even, kind of, start placing it into the flower where you think it might be interesting. See if you feel like it's too big. It might look really nice right there. And then we paint! I'm going to use this nude watercolor, which again, if you don't have nude, little bit of orange, a lot of white will do. And then I'm going to mimic these touches of pink, these touches of yellow throughout. And I'm also going to exaggerate them a little bit. Okay, let's tuck that in there and see how we feel about it. Nice. All right, let's make a smaller one that'll kind of go up in here. Same kind of shape. And let's roll, curl. I'm literally painting the edge of the paper, and then whatever kind of, seeps onto the front, is kind of the effect we're after. I can blend it a little bit with some clean water. Nice. I'm going to go ahead and do a bigger one for right around here. Could definitely change where you curl the paper for each petal. If you're painting over top of your notebook page, just keep in mind you're going to get splashes and splatters. If you're okay with that, great. If you want to keep things really clean, paint over top of a scrap piece of paper. Just putting some line work in this one. Switch things up a bit. And go ahead and place that. Still a few small petals. Cutting off some of this excess, get it out of my way. One

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thing to think about any of these compositions as your working, what are the parts of the natural flower or fruit that inspire you the most? That really get you excited? Those are the elements you want to exaggerate if you're adding paper or if you're painting directly on the page. Exaggerate those areas, those moments that really make you happy. If you want more of an even curl, you can curl while the petal is wet. It's a little more messy. And go a little softer on this one. Be sure to paint a little bit of the underside if you think it's going to show. And the nice thing about garden roses, once you kind of open them up a little, they make it really easy to tuck in paper petals. They hold on really nicely. And when you're placing the petals, you want to think about not placing them all at the same level. Some towards the top, some directly underneath, some just about underneath. You want to keep that beautiful natural dimension going, and not have everything all at the top or all at the bottom. All right, let's add some other elements in, and we can always come back and tweak. Little bit of moss here, just love moss for its softness and kind of billowy texture. You can pull it apart a little, give it some air. It does make a mess so, be prepared for that. And a few dainty little daisies here. Just using my brush to tuck in some unruly, little buds. And more moss. And paint a little moss behind here. Feel like maybe one more big petal up here. And I want to trim this petal a little bit. It has kind of a hard edge right there that I'm not loving. Just tuck it right back in. And one more big petal. Just adding some really delicate wet on damp line work here. Let's do some shadows. This piece definitely turned out a lot more simple than I had originally planned. But I'm really enjoying it that way. So I'm going to go with it. Great point to take a snapshot. Make sure you're happy with the placement of the petal up there. Going to add one more in here because it's the paper petal is kind of showing through, and it doesn't look as natural as I'd like, so I'm going to add a smaller one right there. It's definitely going to need a curl, pretty significant curl. There we go. Nice. Nice, nice, nice.

Day 28 - â œWhen love is the wayâ •
- We're going to paint the quote, When Love Is The Way. I was originally inspired to paint this after watching the royal nuptials of Meghan and Harry. Starting by actually painting the words with a little bit of dirty water. Dirty, because you wanna be able to see what you're sketching out. I'm using an all caps sans-serif font, if you will, and I'll be doing one word at a time. If you try to do the whole thing and then go back and drop color in, it'll be too dry. So starting up here with When. You just wanna kinda make sure all the bottoms of your letters kind of line up across the page, unless you're totally okay with a more, like, wonky layout, which is totally cool. I like mine to line up just a little. Now, choose your colors. And you're literally gonna dab them in and let the water do its work. Look at that, it just takes it and runs, I love it. I'm gonna add a little more water to these before I keep going. If you don't like the way the colors are running together, you can move them around a little bit. And don't panic if things are a little crooked. My When is going up a little on the page, it's all good. I have ways to balance that in the end. Little bit of another green. Take your time, there's plenty of water on the page, this isn't gonna dry quickly. You can really play around with it. There's a little too much pink, I feel, like bubbling here, gonna lift some out. And guys, I am not a calligrapher, this is totally something you can do. It's kinda like cheating, but looks really good in the end. And some more green. Make sure this is wet enough, this last one, before you get going on that. Might add in a little of that pink. This pink in this particular palette loves to travel. Look at that. Okay, we have our When done. You might wanna snag a pencil at this point. I am going to sketch in Love. Love's gonna be right underneath, and then next we'll do Is The Way underneath Love. I like to make a pretty loopy L-O-V-E, okay. Now, here, I'm gonna start bringing in some natural elements. You can just pull from your pile of scraps. Nothing in particular. Start there, add a little bit of some

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painted leaves. Need a little more color. Just adding a little bit of pink. It's not really anything specific, could be a flower. Kind of ran together. And let's finish up this L with some pretty line work. Okay, movin' on. Make sure your brush is clean or you're gonna get little smudges like that. So if you're using your brush to move things around, just make sure it's clean. This can get pretty tedious, but worth it. And sometimes if your brush is a little, even a little bit damp, it can make it really hard to move things around. I smudged over here, so let's go in and make that okay. And let's finish this O with a few painted leaves. Very simple. I've just collected some of these smaller bits, so I can just start grabbing them and placing. Spots like this can be so tedious. If you feel yourself getting frustrated, just take a breath. And one final brush stroke there. Now definitely my When is going up. Find a little sprig of something that's kind of delicate, maybe this, that's kind of curving the opposite way. Sometimes just a little touch like that. So my When is going up. I put this in here going ever so slightly down, it's a little decorative element, and sometimes that can really change things. You might wanna take a snapshot, see how you feel about it. Okay, it's time to add Is The Way. Dirty water, start with the I. Go one word at a time. And The, I'm being mindful of how close I'm getting to the bottom of the L here. I think we're in good shape. Maybe a great idea, too, if you're feeling a little hesitant about these letters, and forming them, is to practice a few words. And really kind of get some confidence in how you'll build these with a little bit of practice. Gonna extend these W's down here to line up a little bit better. And let's get some pink goin'. That pink just plays so nicely. And let's see if I can't find us an exclamation point. Because the pieces are so small in this type of composition, tweezers really could come in handy.

Day 29 - Peony

- I really wanted to work with a peony, but I don't have one, so we're going to make a frankenflower, or a frankenpeony. The peony I'm thinking of making is kind of your quintessential, big, floppy, open peony with a yellow center. So I'm going to start by just playing around. I really think this is gonna be my center. As you start with this process of creating your frankenflower, just play around with the elements that you have. I have petals from a variety of blooms, and I wanna just see how they're gonna work together. I'm gonna also bring in some paper. So why don't we go ahead and cut some paper petals. I love the shape of these two, probably gonna follow suit with that a little bit. Again, if you need a photo reference, just hop on Google. No shame in that. These big peonies tend to have this like floppy, curled effect. So we definitely wanna get that going. Kind of like these here, so I'm gonna start moving along with this. Take these away for a moment. Let's leave these here, and let's start painting in some of our main petals. Wet on dry. Just big shapes, use the broad side of your brush. Still wet on dry. Kind of want this one to feel like it's flopping forward. There we go. Gonna mix up a little bit of a soft peachy pink, to get some accents in here right away. They are strong, but we're gonna go in with clean water. And soften. I'm going to do a really strong touch right there. Peony petals often get little tears in them. They have these little dimples, so I wanna make that a reality. Just careful not to have it be too strong. I'm kind of pushing some clean water up towards that bright color that I painted on just now. There we go. Gonna leave this one go. I like it just how it is. Eh, I don't think it's time for those yet. I think maybe this first. This needs to lay a little flatter. Go off to the side, because this makes a heck of a mess. And let's just trim off the bottom, so we can get a nice flat center. See how that feels. Ah, much better. Get this painted up. Leaving a little white there on purpose. Tuck it under the center. There we go. Need a little bit of a petal popping out underneath these two. When I'm painting flower petals, I like to think of how bricks are laid. They're never laid directly on top of one another. They straddle the ones that came before, and you wanna

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think of that as well with flower petals. Just look more natural when you approach it that way. Taking a little bit of the bright, bright pink. Just on the tip of my brush, dotted some along, and now I'm adding some clean water, just to help spread ever so slightly. Move it around so it does exactly what I want it to do, which is just give a little definition to that edge. Another big drop of clean water, to just blend everything together. I'm seeing this area here, it's weird. It's not right, I'm definitely gonna address it. Maybe one of these will do the trick. Kind of like that. Let's go ahead and do another paper petal for right here. Definitely a smaller one. Adding a dimple right there at the top. Let's exaggerate that dimple a little bit. A great exercise, if you wanna get in some extra practice, if you're really loving this technique, which I hope you are, is to just cut out some petals, cut out some leaves, and play around with painting them, curling them, just get used to the practice, get used to the feel of the paper in your hands, and you'll always be able to use those later. They'll never go to waste. Right away I know that I want one of these in here. Not that one, it's kind of bent. I really like the look of these around the center. They are a little persnickety to place. I wouldn't recommend tweezers for them though, they're so thin. You would either tear them right away, or make some really unfortunate indents. So, just some patience and time. Let's let that mingle, simmer, settle, in our mind's eye, and go ahead with some leaves, and then we can come back and evaluate. See how we feel. Gonna mix a really soft, slightly muted, green. Pick up what's ever on your palette. And something kind of headed up this direction. And then a little something coming down. This is where reference photos can come in great handy, as you're starting out, because you just may not feel comfortable knowing where to add a leaf, what's gonna look good, what's not. Some line work there. Eh, let's do a bud. Peony buds are pretty large. Lots of green when they're young. So let's just do a big green circle with some pink in the middle to start. Gonna let that dry and come back to it. Now this one that I left earlier is looking a little too simple. Let's get some something in there. Definitely some line work. Holding my brush perpendicular. It's kind of a tough area for me, in the angle I'm working from. I'm just changing the silhouette a little bit, so it works a little nicer. One of my little brushstrokes went out of the edge. I hadn't planned that, so we can fix it. Clean water to blend. Some line work here. I'm holding the flower petal, the paper petal. Let's get a stem in here to connect, and a little bit of a leaf hint. Just checking to see how wet it is, not too bad. Can try putting a little more detail in. Just making kind of half circle marks around the center. Should kind of communicate the start of a flower with lots of petals. And some green detailing. Yeah, pretty wet there. Let that dry a little bit more, and we can add in last touch of contrast. Now let's find a real leaf to bring in here. Ah, this little guy is cute. That one not so much. This could work too, but I'm gonna have to trim that brown part off of the top. And honestly, because we have time, let that dry, I'm gonna paint this leaf. Just a little bit of that unexpected pop of color on here. Let's see how the leaf takes to the white. Eh. We'll make it look cool. These experiments that you don't plan on necessarily, that you just think of as you're working, this is what it's all about. This is where the fun happens, because it can be something so simple, or so strange, that makes it all just feel like yours. Let's bring that one out here, and make a painted stem to connect. Let's go back and finish up our bud. I am getting a pretty intense pink on my brush, not a lot of water, because I don't want it to spread. And I'm just adding little, little C's almost. Real dark center. Don't do too much. Get a dark green. Again, not a lot of water. And just do a couple little V's, where the petals that are starting to emerge meet the green leaves on the outside. There you have it. It's pretty simple, but oh so powerful.

Day 30 - House plant

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- I have over 100 houseplants that I take care of on a daily basis, and so in honor of that today we're going to paint a houseplant. Going to start by sketching out a really simple pot. Photo reference would be great. I'm really, really going simple here. Basic terracotta. Just kind of want these parallel, let's call them smiles, two smiles parallel. Connect them at the ends, and then do a really skinny squat oval. I hope you can see it coming to life by now. And then another smile at the bottom. That's it for now. I've got some great elements to start playing with. These are leaves from a bunch of roses. I have no idea what that is, it's lovely though. Some great little specimens to work with. Sadly I do think I'm gonna need to pop this off. Well, I really don't want to do that, so let's just trim it. Perfect. That gives us some dimension which is actually kind of cool. And then, I think I'm gonna paint in a vine that grounds this big focal point leaf to my pot. Just taking a deep green, mixing it with a little bit of palette sludge, whatever you want to call it. And let's go. Just gonna do a nice big curve, right down to the pot. I'm gonna remove this so you can really see what I did. Gonna make it thicker down here. All right, let's bring in some others. And let's paint some in. And so I have a really big drop here. And, even I was like a little oh what am I gonna do with that? But, let's just get a vine going. And, make a leaf. But try to do one that's kind of similar to this. I'm gonna move it just so I can create the shape, really get a good look at it. Yeah, that'll do. Put her back. Let's connect these two in a little bit more of a purposeful way. Thicken this up ever so slightly. Maybe, yeah, have a little Y going on there. That's a lot more interesting. And then maybe that one can connect. This needs to flatten out a little bit. Let's warm it up. And let's connect those two with some pink. Man, does that pink like to travel. So fun. Okay. Let's paint another leaf. I just love the way this pink mixes in so I'm gonna add it. Yeah, gosh that looks cool. I really want to get this terracotta pot painted in. Just want to see what it feels like, what it looks like, and so I'm going for it. Little bit of orange, little bit of green I popped in there to get this kind of dirty orange color. Feel free to leave a little white in between right there. And then inside, let's darken it up a bit. Presumably there's dirt inside. I'm gonna move this bad boy again. Simple. But, it's nice to see that color on there. And let's go ahead and get a paper leaf in there. We need some more dimension. This leaf is so beautiful, so dimensional. So I want to get some of that amazing dimension going on the other side. If you want to sketch this leaf out with pencil first, by all means, go for it. Really want to do whatever makes you feel comfortable in this process. This process is about really enjoying yourself. Pushing yourself but not to the point where you're stressing, or worried about the outcome. I'm gonna wet this and then probably bend it some more. All right, get some color going. Let's get that in there. Okay. We need to connect. And let's add a little something to the edge here. Let's go ahead and do another paper leaf. Quite a bit smaller this time, and a little bit of a different shape. Hmm, that creased pretty decently. Let's try to fix it with a roll. I'm gonna have to add some more paint. It's kind of a cool texture though. This process I find is just chalk full of happy accidents. It's a really flexible process, and if you're willing to just kind of go with the flow, get some really awesome results. And let's connect that. Move him out of the way. Create a little something. If you want your stems to be perfect and have the perfect swoop, and feel effortless, you're gonna need to practice that. I purposefully am going for more of a little whimsical, asymmetrical kind of clunky vibe. But you can definitely practice and get more delicate stems if you'd like. Little bit of line work. Little pink up here. Cover up my smudges. I feel like we need a last little bit of something up here. I'm gonna start with a stem, and see then how I feel with just kind of a wispy stem. That's actually kind of fun. Let's do one down here. Let's do some shadow, and a little suggestion of a table. And call it awesome. And I just want to add a little hint of table or something here. Cover this little smudgy over here. And, I think we have it.

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Day 31 - Bountiful vase

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